Author's Edition, limited to one thousand copies, of which this is No. 464

G. Frank Lydston

From Daddy

Irene Owen Andrews
March 1922

TRUSTY FIVE-FIFTEEN

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BY
G. FRANK LYDSTON, M. D.

BURTON PUBLISHING COMPANY
KANSAS CITY MISSOURI
1921

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To my friend

BRAND WHITLOCK

A writer not only of remarkable stories, but also of great messages for humanity's weal, and one of the noblest actors in the most terrible tragedy in history, as a token of appreciation of the man and his work, in memory of "White Nights in Old Bohemia," and in tribute to those friends of our confident youth who have passed on, this volume is inscribed, by

THE AUTHOR

BOOK I

Chapter I

AN UNCONSCIOUS RIVAL

Mr. Hennessy was mad—mad clear through. His mighty shoulders shook with rage, and the poise of his bullet head and beefy neck suggested an infuriated bull preparing to charge. He literally was frothing at the mouth.

One who knew Hennessy's habits might have suspected incipient hydrophobia; the river was close by, and limpid, aqueous fluids were particularly abhorrent to him. He believed in the external application of water, it is true, but with the reservation that it should not be used prodigally, indiscriminately, nor too often.

In this connection it may be remarked that it is a matter of record that, while a member of the New York city council, the Hon. Mr. Hennessy had defeated an appropriation for public baths on the ground that it was dangerous for poor people to wet themselves all over in winter, and that in summer they could go to Cape May, or to Atlantic City. He did not mention Coney Island, as he just then was in a mix-up with the managers of the various entertainments offered at that interesting resort over a matter of license renewals. The city father had ideas of his own as to the price at which certain things should be "kissed through" at the City Hall.

But it was not the detested aqua-more-or-less-pura

of the river that had aroused the distinguished citizen's wrath. He was seeing things—things he did not like, which could be neither bromided away nor eliminated by aperient waters and Turkish baths.

Hennessy was not handsome at best. His huge frame had become flabby from lack of exercise and padded with fat which he would have been far better without. His wind was bad and his movements sluggish—in brief, the one-time Bowery "champ" was out of condition. Tradition still made him a "holy terror" in a saloon brawl, and with his obvious prestige added to that tradition it was not remarkable that he was still cock of the walk in the awed and select circles in which he moved.

With those whom he wished to impress, Hennessy's prestige lost nothing by sartorial oversight. His tailor and haberdasher habitually did their worst. From his silk hat to his patent leather shoes, there was no discord in his attire. The enormous solitaire-bedecked expanse of loud-striped shirt, the flowing tie of rainbow hues and the "horsey" clothes with their rotund lines and noisy checks, were absolutely in tune with the man—and his trade.

Time, dissipation and full-fed prosperity had worked havoc with what little facial beauty Hennessy once might have had, and King Alcohol, most redoubtable facial artist of them all, had without stint laid the high lights on the great man's nose. His eyes had retreated between puffy sacs that once were lids, and the "tin ears," which he had acquired in gruelling ring battles in his earlier years, stood out from his head like irregular masses of cauliflower that someone in a spirit of waggishness had painted a variegated blend of purple and red.

Anger did not improve Hennessy's appearance,

and when to his livid facial expression of rage that of jealousy was added, it was not remarkable that the result should have been far from pleasing or conducive to confidence. Even the denizens of the Bowery doubtless would have found it somewhat fearsome.

"So, Maggie Halloran!" he growled, "that's why you turned me down, eh? You're stuck on that damned dude! Well, I may have lost out in the love game, but I'll show that big stiff where he gets off before I get through with him. If *I'm* not to have you, you'll not be for the likes o' him, the dirty buttinski. I'll teach that guy better than to monkey with Tom Hennessy's buzz-saw, you betcher life!"

Having delivered this truculent speech to the unresponsive air, Thomas, alias "Boss," alias "Bull" Hennessy stepped out from behind a pile of heavy timbers that lay beside the railroad track, near the village of A . . ., from which point of vantage and seclusion he had been gazing at a couple sitting on a little fishing pier that jutted out into the tranquilly flowing Hudson, apparently gazing idly at the setting sun as it sank in its golden and crimson glory behind the emerald Catskills.

Pausing just long enough to shake his ponderous fist in silent, vicious menace at the unsuspecting subjects of his espionage, Hennessy sullenly wended his way to a large steamer lying at the wharf a little farther up-stream. He scowlingly went aboard, was obsequiously greeted by the captain and every official of the boat who chanced to catch a glimpse of the mighty New York politician, and disappeared in a stateroom *de luxe* off the main saloon.

"Reckon the Boss has got a grouch on," com-

mented one of the freight-handlers, who were busily engaged in hustling a mountain of barrels and boxes from the wharf to the boat.

"Surest thing ye know, an' the Lord help the feller that's riled him!" replied his mate.

"Ye may well say that, Jimmy," returned the other, "Tom Hennessy's a pretty handy man in a scrap—an' a lot better when he starts after ye with his gum shoes on. He's bound to land ye, either way—an' he gits away with it, too. He's got a pull like one o' them freight engines on the Central. He tells the police an' the judges an' juries just where they git off, ye kin bet on that."

The two rugged freight-handlers stood gazing in open-mouthed admiration after Mr. Hennessy until he had slammed shut his stateroom door with an emphasis that bore convincing testimony of his irritable state of mind. Even then they probably would have continued to gaze raptly at the barrier that concealed their hero, had not the captain noted their delinquency and floridly cursed them back to earth and to work.

An hour later the boat was on its way down the river to New York, bearing Boss Hennessy and his rage to surroundings congenial to grouches, where a "peeve" was wont to grow into assault and battery and a full-blown grudge oft blossomed into murder—in hot or cold blood as occasion might demand.

Hennessy was correct enough in his estimate of his own chances with Maggie Halloran, and had made a shrewd and by no means illogical guess at the chances of his supposed rival in winning the favor of that somewhat flirtatious young woman.

As later will be noted, Miss Halloran is not the

heroine of this story. Her only excuse for appearing at all in these pages is that she afforded Boss Hennessy an apparently legitimate cause for hatred of the hero—a hatred most portentous of evil for its victim.

Slight causes—the simplest human conditions—sometimes set in motion very important social machinery. If Maggie Halloran had not been a coquette—one of those physically virtuous but morally unstable females that are found in every social sphere—this story never would have been written.

Maggie Halloran was the daughter of John Halloran, a section foreman on the New York Central railroad, who was handling a large gang of laborers engaged in construction work at A. . . Her mother long since had passed on to that bourne where, let us hope, the harder-working wives of hard-working Irishmen who earn their bread by the sweat of their brows in the employ of soulless corporations, find every morning in their celestial homes elegant spring bonnets, matinee tickets, bricks of ice-cream, and other good things denied them here on earth.

At the age of twenty, with no mother to guide her and hold her down to earth, and with such mis-education as her ambition urged her to seek and her father's means permitted him to provide, Maggie Halloran's tastes and aspirations had put her in something of a class by herself in the eyes of her father's friends and associates. A persistent devourer of yellow-backed literature, and a firm believer in the theory that medieval sleeping beauties were small potatoes compared with real, up-to-date "live ones" in the matter of capturing princes, she had "no time" for the hard-fisted, sweaty sons of labor with whom she daily came in contact. Even

union cards impressed her not. Regarding a certain "union" in which the applicants strove for a life job, with herself as co-worker—or possibly boss —she had views of her own, in which automobiles, fine feathers and social affairs were the main features. Needless to say, her day-dreams had no room for shovels, mattocks, sledges, oaken ties, spikes, frogs, switches, fish-plates, rails, or even a "full dinner-pail."

Realizing in a vague, misty sort of way that his daughter and himself were in a sense out of harmony, John Halloran at first resented her assumption of superiority to his associates as being somewhat personal to himself, but finally accepted the inevitable and came to regard Maggie as being of superior clay. This attitude, as may be imagined, did not add to his popularity with the horde of rough and ready admirers who worshipped the young woman from afar and would have come nearer had occasion permitted.

"A man's a man for a' that," sang glorious Bobbie Burns, and when an honest, hard-working man seeks his mate, the immortal poet's sentiments are likely to find an echo in the toiler's heart. The more primitive the heart, the louder and more insistent the echo.

The idea of the unattainable, rather than self-depreciation, deters the homely social moth from the pursuit of the butterfly. Let the butterfly offer the slightest encouragement, and see how quickly the chase begins, which chase often has been successful and has caused much trouble. Primitive sex instincts may lead to love in a cottage, but, when poverty, sickness and despair come into the door

of that cottage, love sometimes leaves by way of the cellar exit.

Nothing of this, however, ever entered Maggie Halloran's pretty little head. Self-love and a more or less hazy ambition for social position were so strong in her that philosophy had no place in her cosmos. As for doing the really unconventional things which lead to moral wreckage—well, she was a good Catholic, and even the veriest skeptic, if he be a man of the world, knows that this means much.

When Boss Hennessy, who was a near neighbor of John Halloran's and political king of his home ward in New York, came a-courting his daughter, the honest Irishman was extremely flattered and saw visions of political, business and, to his uninstructed mind, even social preferment, through an alliance of his girl with the Boss. Hennessy, as the father well knew, was not only a political dictator, at whose imperious nod even the big chiefs of Tammany were wont to fetch and carry, but also was "solid" with the railroads, who needed and did not hesitate to use—at a price—political influence in Albany. Being solid with corporations spells wealth, hence Boss Hennessy was rich, passing rich, and Halloran felt that a wealthy son-in-law was not a thing to be lightly regarded. Above all, he had not forgotten that it was to Boss Hennessy that he owed his own position with the Central, for good positions were scarce.

A little knowledge on his daughter's part was a dangerous thing for Halloran's ambition, as that worthy gentleman soon discovered. Maggie had views of her own as to the difference between social tweedle-dee and tweedle-dum. She had read many

accounts of young ladies who had captured princes or heroes, none of whom was named Tom, or Mike, or anything as plebeian as these. Claudes and Harolds, Basils and Reginalds there were a plenty, but not a single "Tom" in all the lot. Duverneys, Von Waldens, D'Artagnans and Featherstonhaughs there were in abundance, but in all her reading of chivalry and romance there appeared not one Hennessy, O'Shaughnessy, or even plain Jones. The Smiths were out of consideration altogether, for the best Captain John drew was a squaw. Maggie was posted on "Who's Who in New York" and was willing to compromise on an Astorbilt or a Van Der Gould, but a Hennessy—never!

When, in answer to the paternal suggestion that Mr. Hennessy had serious intentions—which intentions should be agreeable and flattering to the Hallorans—Maggie laid her own ideas before her father, he stormed and raged like an offended bear, but without result save to discover that his daughter was more like her mother than he ever had imagined. The dear departed had been the only thing on earth that "Fighting Jack" Halloran ever had been afraid to face. She had worn the trousers for the family and, to Halloran's astonishment, when the occasion finally arose, his daughter donned and wore them with quite as much determination and sureness of action as had her mother before her.

This was a facer for Halloran, but he made the best of it and when the Boss tentatively broached to him his hope to make Maggie Mrs. Thomas Hennessy, the foreman diplomatically assured him that he was his most ardent admirer and loyal supporter, but would take the liberty of stating that the girl was "young yet," full of impractical ideas and "roman-

tic humbug'' and that it would require time to win her. Meanwhile the Boss should be patient, relying on solicitous attentions and a father's influence to win the point which was so dear to the hearts of both men.

''Above all, Mr. Hennessy,'' he advised, ''don't be afther crowdin' things too fast. Maggie is a girl to be led. Ye can't drive her—she's her mother's very own.''

As to even the ''leading'' of Maggie by anybody, her father also had certain ideas of his own, which he discreetly kept to himself, feeling confident that if the wind blew in the wrong direction Maggie could be relied upon to show Mr. Hennessy the way home by ''the straight road and the level,'' *sans ceremonie.*

Maggie Halloran would have been less than femininely human, had she not taken a certain pride in dangling Boss Hennessy's scalp at her belt. Safe in her heart of hearts lay the image of her prince, which a Hennessy never could shatter, mar nor replace. Retreating behind this image she could give the Boss his *congé* at any time, if the ardor of his suit or the exigencies of the game ever should make it necessary to retire him from the field.

To Maggie's other admirers, Hennessy was a hero, aye, a demigod, of most colossal mould and irresistible to the female heart. To her girl friends, he was a prize beyond the heart's wildest desire. His attentions, therefore, served to give heartaches to other suitors and keep them at a distance, while as for the ambitious ones of her own sex, his adoration lighted in their own souls the fires of envy and jealousy.

So, meaning nothing at all and absolutely sure of

herself, Maggie Halloran allowed the Boss to pile false hope upon false hope, enduring his clove-and-alcohol breath, coarse manners and worse English until—well, until the real hero appeared on the scene. It was then that Boss Hennessy received a jar that blighted his hopes, ended his romance, shook his self-conceit to its very core and aroused the demon that lies deep down in the souls of all primitive men—and Hennessy was primitive, if ever man was.

When John Halloran went up the river with his gang, his daughter accompanied him, as a result of which Boss Hennessy suddenly developed an all-absorbing interest in railroad construction and began to be fashionable in the matter of week-ends. The village of A . . . grew very attractive to the Boss and he not only spent his Sundays in the dead-alive little burg, but became addicted to unexpected droppings-in during the week, much to the edification of his many near-rivals, including both those whom Maggie left behind her in New York and her silent worshippers among her father's men.

The coquettish Miss Halloran at first had welcomed Hennessy as a relief from the monotony of life in A . . . and had ruthlessly gone through the motions of the game known to the fair sex as "leading him on." During several of his recent visits to his charmer, however, the Boss, with the cunning of one to whom experience has brought knowledge—or at least distrust—of the fair sex, had noted a decided change in the young woman's demeanor toward him. She became distant, ill at ease in his society and negligent of the histrionic arts by which she had put in leading strings a man who was almost repellent to her, and whose society she

had tolerated as much for policy in behalf of her father as for the gratification of her own coquettish inclinations and feminine conceit.

Believing in taking the figurative bull of romance by the horns, Hennessy decided to ascertain in the most direct manner possible exactly how his stock stood in Cupid's market; he accordingly proposed to the young woman, and found that his stock was just one hundred points below par, being promptly rejected.

Knowing the variability of the female heart and not unmindful that the rib from which God made Eve was a "floating" rib, Hennessy decided to stick around a while and take a chance on the object of his affections changing her mind. Not being a fool, but in general a shrewd judge of human nature and not less conceited than other men, he decided to keep his weather eye open for a possible rival. To his mind there could be no reason for any woman resisting his charms other than some other man who knew better than he how to "put it over."

The Boss could not be on the ground all the time, but he readily found agents who were—several political henchmen of his were working with the construction gang. These men were only too eager to curry favor with the politician by acting as his carrier pigeons. They did their work well, and their reports should have been conclusive enough, but Hennessy was ever a player of the sure thing, so he determined to investigate for himself. A mid-week trip to A . . . and a half hour's quiet personal sleuthing were sufficient to convince him that his pigeons had brought him an "owre true tale."

Chapter II

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

When Robert Parkyn secured a position as assistant in the engineering branch of the construction department of the New York Central Railroad, he felt that he had reached the second round of the ladder on which he hoped to climb to success. The first round was the acquirement of a good education. The son of a poor widow, his father having died when the boy was so young that he scarcely remembered him, he had been compelled to make his own way in the world almost from infancy.

His mother was the daughter of a fine old Belgian-French family, as impecunious as it was aristocratic. Artistic in temperament and naturally industrious, she had learned the art of lace-making from an old woman servant whom her parents had brought with them to New York.

Faithful old Suzette builded wiser than either she or her young mistress knew, when she taught young Louise the art by which many generations of the old servitor's family had made an honorable living, for when Robert Parkyn, Senior, died, he left nothing but debts behind him. He was a successful lawyer, who saw even greater success just ahead, and spent his money as fast as he made it. He loved his wife and boy, but, like many others who love their families, he forgot that the world did not love his dear ones well enough to protect them from want,

should his own alert mind and vigorous body ever fail them.

When pneumonia strikes a man the fell disease does not inquire as to life insurance policies, "rainy-day nest-eggs" and such things. The miserable infection simply grabs him, fills up his lungs with exudate, chokes off his wind, impregnates his blood with toxins, gives him a fever that clogs his system with more toxins, paralyzes his heart muscle with the vile poisons and refuses to give the victim oxygen with which to combat them. Pneumonia tries to do all this in a great hurry—and succeeds in a frightful proportion of cases.

Mr. Parkyn was one of these unfortunates and, powerful though he was, he had no time to put up even the beginning of a fight for his life. He was dead in forty-eight hours—dead so soon that his widow's distress was an odd combination of grief, astonishment and skepticism. That her big, strong, kind husband was no more was to her incredible.

The funeral over, the sense of heavy responsibility almost overwhelmed Mrs. Parkyn, but through the kind ministrations of several old friends of the family, she finally regained her equipoise and resolved to face the world as bravely and uncomplainingly as she could.

At the suggestion of a woman friend who chanced to know of her accomplishment in the art of lace-making, the widow visited one of the large New York dry-goods establishments and inquired as to the possibility of securing occupation in repairing valuable laces. She was overjoyed to learn, not only that her art was in great demand, but that there practically was a monopoly in lace-mending awaiting a genuine artist at the work.

Lace-mending is difficult and especially trying to the eyes and, although she was well compensated for her labor, there was a limit to the amount that Mrs. Parkyn could accomplish. It therefore was a great relief to her when her son became old enough to do a small part toward the family up-keep. It was a joy also for the mother to discover that young Robert was industrious and ambitious.

Mr. Parkyn was an educated man and his wife had an education far above that of the average cultured woman, hence it was not strange that she resolved that her son should have advantages at least equal to those which his parents had enjoyed. A degree for her son from his father's own Alma Mater, was the least that would satisfy the mother. The son's own ambition heartily endorsed the mother's plans. By the most frugal economy and thrift and almost unbelievable industry, they finally saved enough to put the boy through Harvard.

At college young Parkyn proved a most exemplary student. Not only was he at times well up toward the head of his classes, but he was the crack all-round athlete of the school. Even today, many a Harvard old-timer will recall the glorious day when "Bob" Parkyn's wonderful play lowered the Yale colors in ignominious defeat and sent the sons of Eli home as depleted in pocket as they were broken in spirit.

The old boxing instructor at the Harvard gym was wont to tell until the day of his death, of the time that Bob, in taking a lesson, hit the veteran of a hundred battles a wallop that put him down and out. Quoth the veteran ex-champion:

"That lad whipped one over on me jaw that was a free ride down Queer Street. I'm blowed if it

didn't take two pails o' ice water and an ounce of ammonia to bring me back. An' don't you think I was easy, son; your uncle could sure go some in those days!"—and the old fellow roared with merriment at a memory of which the average man would have failed to see the humor.

Although inclining toward a profession, young Parkyn had no taste for the law and the ministry did not appeal to him, while as for medicine, it jarred his esthetic sensibilities. His bent was mechanical and mathematical rather than otherwise, hence it was quite natural that his mind should have been attracted by the profession of engineering. A civil engineer, therefore, he resolved to become.

By odd jobs of work outside of study and recitation hours and during vacations, the ambitious young fellow managed to earn money to pay his way through the Massachussets Institute of Technology, and to that institution he went soon after his graduation from Harvard.

His twenty-fourth birthday found Robert Parkyn back in New York ready to do battle for fame and fortune. His capital inventoried as follows:

ITEMS

1. One clear, alert head, full of ideas and ideals. (Some of the ideas were impractical moonshine. The ideals were largely rosy "pipe dreams.")

2. Eighteen or twenty pounds, more or less, of good rich blood, coursing through a system in which not a grain of toxins nor a single pernicious microbe lurked.

3. Six-feet-one of bone and sinew, supporting one

hundred and ninety pounds of solid muscle, trained to the minute and fit as a fiddle.

4. A clear eye, clean morals and an unweighted conscience.

5. One million gallons, pounds or yards of ambition.

6. One Harvard degree.

7. One degree from the Massachusetts "Tech."

8. One dear old mother, worn and weary, with eyes dimmed by age and tedious, trying work.

This was considerable capital, but to find avenues of investment for it was another story. Business men are not hypnotized by college degrees and never sit up nights worrying about the other fellow's ambitions.

Some people might not regard the dear old mother as an asset. The experienced, philosophic ones will. While loving her loyally, Bob probably did not so regard her; he was inexperienced and was not a philosopher. He did not know, moreover, that it takes a whip to make a fellow go. If there's any whip more effective for the right kind of a man than a helpless old mother, it is not yet on the market.

Of the various assets with which Parkyn started out on his upward climb, only his good health and muscle appeared to be marketable and even for them the demand was by no means constant. Somebody, somewhere, however, most of the time needs manual labor, and after long, persistent, but fruitless effort to dispose of his knowledge at a living wage, the young man was compelled to market his muscular power for somewhat less than a decent living wage.

He had begun to despair of ever attaining the second round of the ladder which he felt himself

competent and was so ambitious to climb, when he secured a job as freight-handler at the New York Central terminal station. Chance now did for him what persistent effort had failed to accomplish; he attracted the attention of one of the influential officials of the road who, recognizing in the young man superior stuff, and learning of his technical training, secured for him an assistantship in the engineering department.

When, several months later, young Parkyn received an appointment to the superintendency of the construction work at A . . ., he was delighted; it was his first responsible assignment and he felt that much depended upon it. He realized that it gave him the very opportunity he longed for, to show, at least in a small way, the technical knowledge with which he hoped to win his way to success in the profession of his choice. If, however, the young man had known what momentous events in his life were destined to revolve around the assignment, he would not have been so enthusiastic in its acceptance. But the fates plan our lives without consulting us. We play life's game of chess on a board all set with ready-made pieces and, despite all free-will arguments, there are those who believe that we cannot alter the quality of even a pawn, and that an invisible but invincible hand guides ours in every move.

It was with a light heart that the young engineer boarded the up-river steamer for A . . . As the boat wheezed and nosed its way up-stream, Bob for the first time awoke to the beauties of the Hudson, and discovered in himself a vein of romantic sentiment and artistic imagination the existence of which

he never had suspected. The foam plowed up by the no longer prosaic steamer's prow sparkled like jewels in the sun of that beautiful spring morning. The various pleasure craft were wonderful beetles, and snowy-winged butterflies tinged with silver and rose. They once were dingy, man-made things of sombre hues and grimy sails, but in the sunlight of that bright morning they were transformed into properties from Wonderland. The Palisades were marvels of grandeur and stateliness. It seemed strange to him that he never before had noticed this. He had seen the Palisades dozens of times on outing trips.

Up-river lay the foot of the rainbow and that mythical pot of gold of which even men, those children of larger growth, are wont to dream. What magic in the hopeful heart of youth!—magic that transmutes base metal into gold, paints the world with colors to its liking and sees the topmost round of the ladder of fame as soon as the lowest one is pressed by the confident, because inexperienced foot.

To youth, all things are possible. Success is at the end of every road, it matters not what the quest. Youth has but to reach out its hand and grasp both the million and the golden girl. It was an old gray-bearded fake philosopher who, mouthing lies and whistling in the dark to keep up his senile courage, said that forty-five was the "prime of life."

Forty-five the prime of life? Yes, estimating it as the connoisseur does cheese—as "prime" when it's a little too bad to eat and a little too good to throw on the garbage heap.

When Bob Parkyn landed at A . . . he was walking on air. As he strode up to the little hotel where he was to be domiciled for several months,

he glanced appreciatively at the mountains, behind which the late afternoon sun was descending like a huge red ball of glowing molten copper, threw back his sturdy shoulders, elevated his chin just a trifle higher than was habitual with him, drew in deep breaths of the balmy spring air, glanced at the indifferent idlers hanging about—and half wondered why the arrival of the future President of the New York Central should cause so little excitement among the towns-people. He did not get an accurate sense of his own proportions until the next morning, when the dream-president of the road stepped down and out, and plain Mr. Robert Parkyn assumed his decidedly unromantic duties as superintendent of railroad construction.

Chapter III

AN UNSUCCESSFUL CAST

Miss Maggie Halloran was an exceedingly wide-awake young person. She had a keen eye for human externals and an instinctive appreciation of the "real thing" in masculinity when it came within range of her perceptive faculties. These faculties worked with great rapidity, and at dinner on the very evening of his arrival at A . . ., the new superintendent was "sized up" and marked for investigation.

The stage setting for a romance was simple enough; the Hallorans boarded at the little inn and as the female Barkis, Maggie, was willin', the rest was easy.

Bob Parkyn was not a lady-killer, nor especially susceptible to the lure of sex, but like every other young man who chances to be marooned where there is but one really attractive girl, from whom a fellow couldn't get away if he would, and wouldn't if he could—this regardless of whether the situation develops more than a passing sentimental interest in the fair one—he accepted the inevitable and natural; consequently Maggie and he soon became very good friends.

The young woman certainly was fair to gaze upon, and a less serious-minded young man than Parkyn probably would have immediately fallen a victim

to her blandishments. She bore, to be sure, the unmistakable stamp of the ordinary parvenue who, by virtue of a smattering of education and a well-developed imitative faculty, has to a certain degree risen above the social status to which she was born, but this was more than offset by the physical endowments that nature had lavished upon her. Her wealth of raven-black hair, clear brunette complexion and large, luminous gray eyes, with their long dark lashes that looked as if they had been darkened by the touch of a sooty finger, formed an aggregation of charms which is unmistakably characteristic of a certain type of Irish beauty. To these attractions were added a lithe, voluptuous figure, and a piquancy and animation that were Maggie Halloran's very own.

But Bob Parkyn was decidedly on another job just then, and while not averse to the companionship of the little Irish lass—for A . . . was deadly dull after working hours—he had no thought of even casual gallantries, while as for anything more serious, Maggie was obviously *de classé*; even if our hero had been looking for matrimonial trouble,—which he most emphatically was not. He was far from being a snob, but anything save genuine culture and true gentility of breeding in women did not appeal to him. Maggie's occasional lapses into slang and the undeniable flippancy of speech in which she too often indulged, alone would have been sufficient to hold in check any serious intentions on his part.

Although at first sight he instinctively disliked Hennessy and subsequent observation merely crystallized his distaste for the Boss, that important personage was not an appreciable quantity in the

young engineer's cosmos. Having formed an adverse opinion of him, he had given him no further thought. Neither had he ever been interested in Hennessy's attitude toward either Maggie Halloran or himself.

Miss Halloran's dreams of princes and heroes ever were tinged with a degree of commercial practicality. She knew something of the salaries of young railroad superintendents of construction, hence she primarily regarded her attempts to land Bob Parkyn as by way of a flirtation and all in the day's work. She found, however, that the young man was a pretty slow proposition and the new experience of being the hunter instead of the quarry at first piqued and then—with the fascination of the not easily attainable—aroused in her bosom the belief that her prince really had come. As was to have been expected, her interest grew warmer as the object of her pursuit seemed more oblivious to her charms, and the inevitable happened. She soon fell as violently in love with the young superintendent as was possible for a woman with her regard for self-interest.

Despairing of success along orthodox lines of courtship—in which woman is expected to be merely a passive party—and confident that Bob was obdurate merely because he could not see that her hitherto irresistible charms were all for him, the young woman finally resolved to be more aggressive than the canons of good taste would have approved.

But desire must wait upon opportunity, and Parkyn, blissfully ignorant of the situation and himself as proper and open-minded as a well brought up youth should be, gave the young woman no opportunity to lead him into any situation in which sen-

timent might have been given play. She laid all sorts of ingenious traps for him, but without success. Moonlight boat rides, late afternoon strolls by the river, *téte a têtes* in obscure corners of the veranda of the rambling old inn, expressive glances and doleful sighs alike missed fire. He talked on serious subjects; perversely he misinterpreted his fair companion's tricks of the eyes as expressions of interest in his various topics of conversation—most of which, it must be acknowledged, were Greek to her—whilst her sighs merely elicited from him solicitous and purely friendly inquiries as to the state of her health.

On the evening our story opens and Boss Hennessy's mind was so perturbed, Maggie Halloran had her first opportunity to talk sentiment with Bob Parkyn —an opportunity which proved to be barren enough, for he responded to her lead by bringing in a third person in a manner that effectually blocked all further assaults by her upon the citadel of his heart.

Parkyn was sitting on the veranda of the hotel enjoying a quiet after-dinner pipe, when he spied Maggie on the little fishing pier, apparently idly throwing bread crumbs to the hungry small fish, large schools of which were playing about in-shore.

A wiser one than the young engineer at once would have seen that the lady was posing for his special edification. Even he, however, noted that she was very graceful and that her every movement, outlined as it was against the background of the river, displayed her magnificent figure to the best advantage.

Looking up as if casually, she called to him and beckoned him to join her, with a wave of her hand that

appeared artless enough to the uninitiated young man, but in which a more worldly individual would have detected the guile displayed since the world began, by every daughter of Eve who hath gone man-hunting.

Parkyn just then would have preferred self-communion in the silent companionship of Lady Nicotine, but a pretty girl was calling him and he perforce was compelled to do her bidding, so he leisurely strolled down to the pier.

The couple seated themselves on a mass of cordage, and Maggie proceeded to cast her hook for the fish that she had resolved to land in Cupid's net. Whether the young woman's adroitness was not equal to the ardor of her quest, or she was unskilled in diverting conversation from the purely intellectual topic affected by Parkyn into the realms of sentiment, would be difficult to say, but whatever the explanation, her efforts met with poor success until by a happy inspiration she alluded to an elopement in New York high life, an account of which she had read that day in the metropolitan papers.

" I suppose, Mr. Parkyn," she ventured, "that such romantic happenings do not appeal to you at all."

"I must acknowledge that they do not, Miss Halloran—either to my sympathy or understanding," he replied, indifferently.

She stabbed aimlessly with her parasol at the toe of one of her dainty white slippers, and then looked coyly up at the young engineer from beneath her huge white hat, with eyes full of meaning for one who could or would see.

"Is it because you haven't had experience that

you can't understand nor sympathize with lovers?" she queried, demurely.

He looked at her somewhat quizzically.

"I fear that must be the explanation, Miss Halloran. On the other hand, perhaps I have been too busy to sit up and take notice. My duties always have kept me in the treadmill of work, and I've not yet had time to look around.

"Then there's another reason of which I am certain," he continued, with a laugh. "My dear old mother would raise an awful row if she ever suspected that she had a rival."

The young woman evidently was not gaining ground and began to fear that she was up against a stone wall, but, gamely enough, continued what bade fair to be a losing battle. She bit her lip and with difficulty restrained the impulse to stamp her foot in emphatic relief of suppressed emotions.

"You don't mean to say that you never were interested in any woman but your mother—that you never had a sweetheart?"

"Not since I courted a little tow-headed girl with her hair in braids who lived next door, toted her books to school and fought the other boys for her smiles. We were going to get married when we grew up, but our tastes evidently changed. She went away to school, I went to Harvard, and we forgot all about our pledges. She finally married a rich shoe merchant and left the country, that is," he laughed, "she went to live in New Jersey, while I —well, I married a profession."

There were tears of vexation in Maggie Halloran's eyes as she looked away toward the mountains, in pretended unconcern.

Parkyn noticed the young woman's emotion and was startled. Like a flash he comprehended her attitude and cursed his own stupidity in permitting matters to develop as he had done. It was a delicate and critical situation, and he was wise enough to realize that it was his duty to convince her, as diplomatically as he might, but once and for all, that the case was absolutely hopeless.

Man's instinct of self-preservation, like woman's intuition, sometimes is a useful substitute for the judgment that experience brings. It certainly did yeoman service for Bob Parkyn on this occasion—an occasion which, no matter how skilfully and successfully he might handle the affair, was likely to be embarrassing.

"I was not quite frank with you, Miss Halloran, I have been for some time interested in a young lady but," and he laughed merrily, "I never have met her, and don't even know her name."

Miss Maggie immediately lost interest in the scenery at which she had pretended to be gazing, and was all attention. She even forgot the tears she had been trying to conceal. So sudden was the interest excited in her bosom that she instinctively lapsed into slang.

"You've never met her! What are you giving me?"

Although wincing at her slang, Parkyn was quietly amused by the volume of skepticism displayed by the young woman's vulgarism.

"I don't wonder that you are skeptical, but the explanation is simple. I became interested in the young lady's picture. I found it in the car on the elevated one morning. It was a fragment of a magazine illustration. Just enough of the descriptive

matter remained to show that she had written some book or other, which just then was attracting the attention of the public. The picture interested me so strongly that I preserved it, and I still have it."

"Is she pretty?" she asked, dolefully.

"Very beautiful. But you shall judge for yourself."

He took from his pocket a card case and from it a picture, evidently somewhat the worse for wear, and handed it to her. Maggie gazed at the picture for a moment.

"I s'pose you are in love with her by now," she said, returning the picture with a brave show of indifference.

"I'm afraid I am—if it is possible to love a woman whom one never has seen," he replied smilingly, as he placed the picture in the case and returned it to his pocket.

"Why haven't you looked her up?" she asked, turning away with renewed interest in the scenery across the river.

"I have not yet had time to begin the search, which very likely will be a long and tedious one. There are dozens of magazines and many woman authors. I found the picture just before I came here and, as you are aware, my present job and location are not the sort that give a fellow much time for romancing, to say nothing of making a still hunt for mysterious ladies."

"Maybe she's already married," said the young woman, acidly.

"Perhaps," he replied, soberly and with no satirical intent. "That kind usually are. Some other fellow almost invariably sees 'em first. But some day I'm going to find out whether she is or not,

and if she is—well, I'll still have the picture anyway, and that's all I shall be entitled to. If she is single I am going to ascertain whether I have read her pictured face correctly, and if I conclude that I have, why, I am going to try my best to convince her that I'm the only man in the world. She's the girl of my dreams, when I have any—this job of mine makes a fellow sleep too soundly for much dreaming—and when I find her I'm going to see if I can play the star rôle in her own dreams."

"You'd better get busy, then," she returned sarcastically, trying with poor success to hide a sneer. "Some other fellow may be doing some dreaming—if she really isn't married already."

"Possibly," he answered, gravely, "but I'll not borrow trouble for, after all, the case is suggestive of the old lady's formula for making chicken soup. 'First catch your chicken.' "

The couple sat for a while gazing silently toward the river and the mountains beyond the farther bank, when the young woman complained that the air was growing chilly and suggested returning to the hotel.

As they rose to go, the down-river steamer swept by, freighted with numerous things, not the least of which was 'Boss' Hennessy and his grouch—and future troubles galore for our young friend, Robert Parkyn.

The next evening's boat took Maggie Halloran back to New York. She had informed her father that she wished to make a prolonged visit with relatives in Hoboken. As John Halloran was under petticoat government and the "governor" was his daughter, he asked no questions, but took her departure as a matter of course.

Here endeth the rôle of Maggie Halloran in the drama which will be enacted in these pages. Her part was but a small one, but she acted quite like what the chemists call a catalytic ferment—she set things going with a vengeance, but herself came out unchanged and ready to make more trouble. Her heart-ache, if she really experienced one, and her "peeve"—which is more to the point—probably lasted at least until she arrived at her destination, by which time she doubtless was ready to "buck up" and, like a female Alexander, seek new worlds to conquer. She was young, not quite a fool, and there were plenty of fish in her sea of dreams.

Parkyn understood, and he heaved a sigh of relief when the steamer that bore the young woman away left the dock, but his chief consolation was that her father, for whom he had developed a warm regard, evidently had no suspicion of the true state of affairs.

As the boat disappeared from sight down the river, the young man took from his pocket the picture he had shown to Maggie Halloran and gazed at it long and earnestly. He scarcely knew why he had preserved it. He never had been much given to sentimentalizing—he surely could not be really in love with the pictured face of a person whom he never had seen, and probably never would see—and yet, the face held him. The clear, intelligent eye, the beautiful sensitive mouth, and the great coils of dark hair, which he felt sure must be her own—for they matched her heavy, exquisitely arched brows —attracted him most powerfully. And then he looked intently at his mother's photograph, that shared with the other picture a pocket in the card-case. Returning both pictures to the receptacle and stowing it away in his pocket, he sighed deeply.

Chapter IV

HENNESSY BEGINS LAYING HIS WIRES

When Boss Hennessy needed a henchman for shady work, he never was compelled to waste time in the quest. He always knew the man he wanted for the particular job, and had only to pass the word along the line by "the underground" to ascertain just where he could put his finger on him.

The human rats of the underworld stood not on the order of their going when Hennessy called them. He merely had to designate the time and place and his man was there "on the dot." On this occasion, however, for obvious reasons it suited the Boss' pleasure to go to his man, after he had quietly located him. The tool he just then especially wanted was employed in an establishment which the old-timers of New York will recall as worthy of more than passing mention.

In its day, Harry Hill's resort at Houston and Crosby streets, in lower New York, probably was the most notorious and most cosmopolitan "joint" in the metropolis. Merely to visit it savored of adventure. No full-blooded sight-seer of the male persuasion ever visited the city without taking in this famous resort. Even some of the venturesome, yet respectable, members of the fair sex could be seen almost nightly at Hill's, in half-frightened quest of the stolen fruit of novelty and excitement. The stage entertainment offered was varied enough

to suit everybody, from the most fastidious to the toughest of the tough. Variety acts—the forerunner of the modern cabaret—limited-round prize-fights, the can-can, selections by broken-down operatic artists—everything was on the card, from pretended moral-uplift stunts to moral-degradation specials.

Music was as essential as liquor to the pleasure of Hill's patrons, but volume and explosiveness were its dominant characteristics. The raucous blare of the metals and the clash of drum and cymbal pleased the ear of the audience better than did the softer tones of the strings. As to the artistic quality of the selections, the less said the better. Art and esthetics ever have been sacrificed to sensualism in the Tenderloin.

In front of the stage was a railed-in enclosure devoted to Terpischore, gayest and most wanton of the muses. Here, between acts, those of the audience who wished to dance were permitted to do so without stint, audible criticism, or any regulation whatsoever as to the kind of dance indulged in—provided it were decorous.

And dance! The dancing masters of the upper-world might have learned much of grace and technique from the "molls," red-light "ladies" and Bowery toughs who appeared in the dancing square at Harry Hill's—and some of the society leaders of today who affect the tango, the turkey trot and the grizzly bear might have learned something of sex-decorum from them.

Mr. Hill made a special and strenuous point of outward observance of etiquette on his public dancing floor, which sometimes deceived the uninitiated as to the character of his business and a large part of his patronage.

The house official "heelers" ever were on the alert for persons who indulged in "ungentlemanly" or "unladylike" conduct. When a "lady" grew boisterous or too demonstrative in her fake affection for some bibulous dupe, she was quietly called down. Male offenders against the house rules were firmly and by no means gently led to the door and deposited in the gutter. If the party thus expelled was not a gangster, or a "friend of the house," but chanced to be a visitor worth the picking, the Lord help him! He was "rolled" *en route,* and landed in the gutter minus his watch, wallet and any jewelry which he might be foolish enough to be carrying about with him. Just by way of emphasizing the protest of the house against rowdyism, the party thus unceremoniously kicked out was so thoroughly beaten up that a sojourn in Bellevue or Chambers Street Emergency Hospital usually was a painful necessity.

Not only did this summary method of dealing with refractory customers assist in the up-keep of Harry Hill's reputation for orderliness, but it served to aid the official "bouncer" in keeping his hand in. As the stalwarts employed by Mr. Hill were either professional manhandlers and thugs, or ex-prize fighters, gentle exercise with fist and foot on the human body was necessary to health, proper muscular tone and that cheerfulness of disposition which is so essential to a really enthusiastic bouncer.

The police and magistrates were in perfect sympathy with the proprietor's conception of an orderly place of entertainment and were wont to heavily fine injured parties who escaped the hospital, only to land in the police station, thus ably seconding Mr. Hill's laudable ambition to run the most respect-

able, though democratic, and most popular "club" on Manhattan Island, or anywhere in the vicinity thereof.

Over all hung that subtle, insidious, poisonous miasm of vice which marred one's very soul, and the taint of which none might escape after breathing it.

Nowhere in New York could such a variety of human elements be found gathered together as at Harry Hill's. Blasé young bloods from upper-tendom touched elbows with immature gawks from the rural districts, and staid metropolitan business men rubbed against long-whiskered "rubes" from the country. Sailors who had come off ship resolved to have a lark, brawny longshore-men and professional "pugs" sat at the little tables about the room, *vis a vis* with pale-faced brokers' clerks and shop salesmen. Commercial drummers, killing time and their own health and morals, with an occasional soldier on furlough from Governor's Island, hobnobbed with light-fingered dips, flashily dressed gamblers and pot-bellied politicians. Professional thugs con-men, strong-arm men, yeggs, gangsters, and gun-men—to whom robbery was a pastime and murder a diversion, or even a profession—all were there making merry.

Here and there in the crowd could be seen a few women of undoubted respectability, under the escort of men who looked as ill-at-ease as their female companions did brazen. The fair ones obviously were trying to adapt themselves to their surroundings and do as did the Romans.

Then there were a few forlorn-looking little shop girls, not yet lost; poor little moths, fluttering around the candle of vice, which was destined ere long to scorch their feeble wings and drop them

into the vile stew of the underworld, never to rise again.

Mingled with the crowd at the tables that lined the sides of the room, might be seen a number of tawdry chorus girls, "gold digging" after the show, and dozens of women from the tenderloin. White slaves, many of them—harpies, all. Some of these poor creatures were "molls"—consorts and stool-pigeons of professional thieves. Others themselves were thieves of the most dangerous and clever sort.

Even those among these women who were working a "graft" of their own, also were working for the "house" on commission. They quietly forced themselves on the male patrons of the place and induced them to treat to drinks at exorbitant prices. The women usually drank colored water. The commission on this was higher than on the real stuff and drunkenness was not conducive to success in the efforts of the women to work their individual graft.

The illustrious Mr. Hill probably would have resented the assertion that his resort was a "speak easy," but nevertheless that is precisely what it was, the women who plied their trade in the place having a business understanding and arrangement with the house, either on their own account or that of the cadets and white slavers who owned them, soul and body.

From time to time some painted Circe led her victim from the hall to her lair in the neighboring tenderloin to be despoiled of his valuables by the panel game or by open violence.

The evil wrought by these poor unfortunate women stopped not with their immediate victims. Often they infected their patrons with foul and loath-

some disease, which they in turn carried to decent female kind to ruin their health, wreck their lives and blight, destroy or blind their posterity.

A grim revenge this, which the scarlet woman ever has inflicted upon the society that has cast her out, and upon the sex that has pulled her down, enslaved her body and corrupted her soul—a revenge still more terrible upon her sisters of the order of purity and higher social standing, who are wont to gather their immaculate skirts about them, shrink as from a leper, and pass by on the other side when they meet upon the street the woman of the underworld.

The "gon-molls"—professional female "dips"—did their work upon the spot, so cleverly that rarely was there any "squealing" on the victim's part with the resultant necessity for a hypocritic howl by the management.

The dexterity of these women was almost incredible. A man's wallet often would be taken from his pocket by one of them, his roll extracted and replaced by a wad of paper wrapped in a single remaining bill and the wallet returned to his pocket without detection.

The women usually worked in pairs, the wallet with its entire contents, or the money alone, being passed to a confederate, who, under pretext of retiring for a moment, disappeared and never came back. Diamonds, or other jewelry, and watches went the same road.

The "police," say you? Don't waste time discussing the police. Mr. Hill ran a "respectable" resort under police "protection." When a "boob" made a "holler," and the woman was arrested, the police took good care to so delay the machinery of the law that the victim of the robbery was tired out long

before the case possibly could come up for trial. This was especially easy if, as often was the case, the victim was a respectable farmer or substantial business man from out of town who, like as not, passed the plate on Sundays and couldn't afford to have the smell of brimstone on his clothes when he returned home. And smell to heaven his garments would, if the home folks ever read in the metropolitan papers of his fall from grace.

If it was necessary to compromise with the victim, the police did so, suggesting to him that he ought to be satisfied with getting back without publicity or loss of time, half his money and the watch that his "dear old father" gave him. Whatever terms were made with the victim, the woman thief gave to the police half the net proceeds of the robbery —"gun money."

If the victim was game and the case finally came up for trial, the police magistrate and the public prosecutor did their duty—to their friends—and the complainant left the court room with increased patriotism and wonderment at the marvels of law and justice.

The gamblers who led their pigeons from Harry Hill's to be thoroughly plucked in safe and secluded rooms upstairs, or conveniently situated nearby, and the thugs and confidence men who led their victims away to slug and rob them at leisure, basked in the smiles of the Tammany Tiger and were "protected" by the official powers that prey—the "men higher up," who are the most voracious of all the grafting blood-suckers of our social system.

Even when the victim passed from earth by the assassination route to return no more—the river was not far away and a blackjack or a "life preserv-

er'' made no sound—the denizens of the underworld were unafraid, for they stood together. Without their help, the police would have been powerless, even if they had been honest and efficient, for if ever criminals cease to betray criminals, the sleuth, like Othello, will find his occupation gone.

As the gamblers paid monthly tithes to the police, and hence were ''solid with the front office'' at the City Hall, their various paraphernalia were fixed to win, and ''trimming a boob'' was as safe as shooting Shanghai chickens in one's own back lot. The ''gentlemen'' whom the victim met at poker were experts in slight-of-hand, marking cards and manipulating cold decks.

There are many honest policemen, but no honest police systems. Police business really *is* a ''business'' and run on up-to-date lines. The police industry in our large cities always has stood on four mighty pillars, each as big and powerful as Atlas. It has been supported on one corner by crime, on another by prostitution, on another by the liquor traffic and on the fourth and last by the cocain and ''hop'' joint. All four of these pillars ever have rested upon a foundation of corrupt politics. Since cities began, the corner-stone of the rotten edifice has been graft.

In all reason, should the police be expected to do the Samson act and pull down its own house about its ears? Is it so remarkable that the police system should swallow up the decency and self-respect of so many of those who officially live by it? The police grafter is often as much the victim of the corrupt system as are the taxpayers whom he so poorly and venally serves and who, in the last analysis, really are responsible for the system.

It was midnight on "amateur night" at Hill's. On the stage shrieked, capered and cavorted a dozen or so unfortunate, degenerate, theoretically male creatures branded by nature with the awful stigma of sex abnormality. These blots upon humanity's scutcheon were alleged amateur female impersonators, going through a pretended "trying out" process. The crowd knew better and the wise ones were aware that the human misfits were perverts from resorts close by—"protected" resorts well known to the police, devoted to the most awful debaucheries known to degraded humanity, which, when it sinks to the absolute zero of depravity, gives the anthropoid apes and the pithecanthropus a good case of libel against Darwin, and puts a gray parrot out of the running, so far as immorality is concerned.

Mr. Hennessy arrived at Hill's a little before midnight. He was greeted with the deference which always characterized his entree to public gatherings in the tenderloin. The proprietor himself bowed most servilely and would have shaken his hand had not the Boss rudely brushed past, going to a far corner of the room, where he seated himself at an unoccupied table.

The waiters and some of the patrons commented in whispers on the distinguished new arrival, and several of the female contingent of the crowd glanced admiringly in his direction, but Hennessy's magnificent isolation was not disturbed. The wise ones knew better than to intrude on the gentleman's privacy without important business or a special invitation—it would not have been healthful—and the dullest observer might have seen that the Boss wanted to be alone.

Hennessy languidly watched the entertainment until a boxing bout was staged. He showed some interest in this, but it was too tame and unsanguinary to suit him.

"A pair o' rotten dubs!" he snarled, quite audibly, and then lapsed into complete indifference.

Boss Hennessy was a pretty tough specimen of humanity and no stickler for the proprieties, but he was possessed of the masculine virility which characterizes many of his class, and when the "amateur" stunts came on the boards his face expressed his disgust in unmistakable fashion. He was about to openly manifest his displeasure by leaving the hall, intending to emphasize his protest against the disgusting exhibition by returning at the conclusion of the act, when he caught sight of the man he was seeking, who was in the act of bouncing from the hall and "rolling" an obstreperous patron of the place.

The bouncer was returning to his post, grinning with satisfaction at the pleasure and profit of a duty well-performed. Hennessy caught his eye, greeted him with an almost imperceptible nod, and beckoned to a waiter who was passing with a tray of poison for a near-by table. The man hurriedly delivered his tray and hastened to the boss.

"Say, Bo," ordered Hennessy in a low tone, "tip it off on the quiet to Butch that I want him to take a pasear over this way an' stumble onto me accidentally. Don't get balled up now. Chase yerself! An' don't let anybody get wise. Bring me a schooner o' suds for a stall."

"I got yer, Mr. Hennessy," said the waiter, with a wink, as he pocketed the half dollar tendered him by the Boss and disappeared. He returned short-

ly with the beer and a few minutes later unostentatiously delivered the message.

The man whom Hennessy wanted glanced cunningly toward him, cleared his throat behind his hand to indicate that he understood and a little later strolled toward Hennessy's corner, glancing from side to side as he progressed, as if looking for more breaches of decorum on the part of the guests.

The bouncer, apparently by accident, caught sight of Hennessy just as he was about to pass that worthy's table.

"Well, well! Just lookee who's 'ere! Mr. 'Ennesy, blime me h'if it ain't! Where'd you blow from?"

"From up-river, Butch. Been havin' an outin'—an' a good time generally."

"Glad ye 'ad a good time, Mr. 'Ennessy, but there's no h'accountin' for tastes," and Butch grinned meaningly. "W'en h'I goes for a h'outin' I don't go h'up-river. Not if h'I knows it. Don't like the 'otels h'up there, sir, 'specially at . . . "

"Yes, I know," interrupted the Boss, testily, "but if you'd use yer brains more and yer gun less, ye wouldn't know so much about that stir up-river. There's a new style warden up there now, who ain't broke in yet. He believes in reformin' crooks with baths and spellin' books. Them things 'd be fatal to you, so you'd better cut out the rough stuff."

"H'all right Boss, h'I'll be careful. H'I don't care to 'elp break that fierce guy in. But h'I'll tote me little smoke-wagon, just the same. When a feller needs it, 'e needs it damn bad."

"Sit down and have a beer, Butch. It'll look better."

"Ugh! H'I'm so full o' Dutch suds now, that me teeth is afloat an' me mouth tastes like a Chinese laundry, but h'I'll take a small beer, h'if it's a stall ye want," and the crook dropped into a chair.

"What luck with that geek ye bounced just now?" asked Hennessy.

"Nothin' h'extry," and Butch grinned sheepishly. "A h'off-colored spark, a leather wit a kid's roll h'in it, an' a yellow clock an' slang that looks like it might h'a been 'is grandpa's. H'I'm bettin' it's shice, but maybe it's the real goods h'at that. The 'ole bloomin 'aul looks like h'eats an' beer fer a week, that's about h'all."

The waiter delivered the beer and the two men touched glasses.

"Meet me at Black Bill's tomorrow night at ten sharp," Hennessy said in a low tone, looking at the stage and apparently commenting on the performance. He looked at his watch—"No, it'll be tonight; it's one o'clock, or I'm a Dutchman! Don't let anybody pipe ye off, an' say nothin' to nobody. See?"

"You're h'on, Mr. 'Ennessy."

The two drained their glasses, shook hands, and bade each other good night, Butch returning to his strenuous duties and the Boss, after sitting a while to divert suspicion, should any have been excited, leisurely departed from the hall, nodding a curt greeting to several men and women as he passed.

Hennessy smiled sardonically as he recognized in the crowd on his way out, several groups of men and women from the aristocratic sections of the city who, under the guise of a "slumming" expedition were doing the red-light district and the var-

ious disreputable resorts of the tenderloin—and incidentally gratifying primitive instincts that were stronger than curiosity.

He also saw men of gentle birth and breeding who were there looking for the suffrages of the "submerged tenth." These were prospective candidates for office or, as the denizens of the district expressed it, "swell guys out fer de big graft."

These latter persons were regarded somewhat cynically by the Boss. He often had taken full advantage of the fact that politics makes strange bedfellows, and had done some very profitable business in furnishing questionable votes for aristocratic office-seekers who, while justifying dubious means by profitable ends, considered themselves superior to the men who sold them votes and furnished them repeaters at so much a hundred, and he felt only contempt for such persons.

At the farther side of the room, near the entrance to the hall, Hennessy observed one of his female "discards," who appeared to be under the escort of one of his sworn political foes. The party of four or five at the woman's table appeared to be discussing the Boss in an obviously unfriendly way.

Hennessy contemplated the group for a moment.

"Didn't take you long to catch another sucker, Aggie," he chuckled sardonically to himself. "I wish him joy of ye—the d——d boob! Hope ye trim him proper," and he went serenely on his way.

At the door, the urbane and politic Mr. Hill bade the Boss good night and asked him how he liked the show.

"Most of it'll pass muster, Harry, but take it from me, ye'd better cut out them Willie boys with the petticoat stunts. They'd queer a show at a

nigger joint in hell. That sort o' rough stuff makes a real guy seasick. Get me?

The immorally proper Mr. Thomas Hennessy passed out into the night, leaving Mr. Hill vainly trying to reconcile his knowledge of the Boss's ethical principles—or rather, his lack of them—with his attitude toward abnormal sex depravity in general and its exponents in the form of amateur female impersonators in particular.

Chapter V

THE FRAME-UP

"Black Bill" was one of New York's most versatile and industrious citizens. His place on the water-front, not far from where the New York end of the Brooklyn Bridge now stands, had manifold uses for its patrons. Ostensibly a resort for seamen, as the sign, "Sailors' Anchorage and Home" over the door ostentatiously proclaimed, it really was one of the worst dens of thieves and other social scum in the city—which implies one of the worst in the world.

Originally a "crimp" and the keeper of a sailors' doggery in an English seaport town, from which he was induced to emigrate by an unfriendly constabulary and police magistracy, Bill Sayer was peculiarly qualified to conduct a disreputable dive and trap for luckless sailor-men in the metropolis of America. Incidentally, he had "done time." Quarrelsome when in his cups, a terror in a rough-and-tumble fight, absolutely unmoral, and fearless in battle as a bulldog, the hard-fisted ex-convict was a man whose very friendship was dangerous and whose enmity was well-nigh fatal to its object.

Woe to the luckless sailor-man who fell into Black Bill's vulture-like clutches! If the victim chanced to be drunk, he was robbed—"lush working" was a specialty among the habitues of the place, who served Bill and got their "divvy." If he was sober

and had money the sailor was slugged to death's door and his pockets rifled; he sometimes was murdered outright, his body being stripped at leisure.

There was no chance of the thugs being brought to book. The police on the water-front knew their business and were deaf, dumb and blind, when any disturbance was heard that might cast suspicion on Black Bill's joint.

When seamen were at a premium, "knock-out drops" were used, and the sailor robbed and shanghaied. When the poor devil awoke to a consciousness of his surroundings, he found himself penniless. He also discovered that he had been signed, sealed and delivered to some sailing master and was well out to sea, where distance from shore and a rope's end skilfully applied were sufficient argument that he would better accept the inevitable.

It was at Black Bill's that the river and harbor pirates of New York planned their depredations along the water front; it was there that they divided and concealed their spoils. Bill was their clearing-house and fence, and what was more, he was a friend of Boss Hennessy's, and that made him a friend of the "bulls," from the humblest plainclothes man or patrolman, to the lordly chief in the front office.

One of the most profitable industries carried on at Black Bill's was the barter and sale of white slaves. From originally keeping on hand a supply of these poor creatures for the benefit of the male patrons of the house, to the establishment of an "exchange" patronized by the keepers of the resorts of the red-light district, was a most natural development.

"Skirts" were easy to obtain. By getting in

touch with procurers in the New England factory towns and subsidizing immigration officers who had a keen eye for eligibles landing at Castle Garden, friendless and alone, Bill was able to make the supply of white slaves at all times equal to a large and profitable demand.

Black Bill's establishment was especially well located for the more hazardous branches of his business—granting that, under police protection, his business really involved any hazard. The East river was near, the locality secluded, dark as Erebus and deserted at night, and the rising and falling tide soon took away from the immediate neighborhood any dead bodies which the exigencies of Bill's nefarious trade caused to be thrown into the river.

A "life preserver"—an eelskin filled with bird shot—leaves no tell-tale mark on its victim's head or neck, and a man who is thrown into the river while unconscious from liquor or drugs is a still safer proposition for the murderer, should the body ever turn up on a slab at the morgue.

A dead body that has been beaten up and disfigured by bumping against the piling of wharfs and docks as the rushing waters carry it to and fro, or cut up by floating ice and propeller screws, tells no tales to a discreet coroner's deputy, save that of an "unknown" suicide or accidental drowning. Mysterious disappearances in which no corpse ever is found are not even a nine days' wonder in New York.

One of the obvious reasons for Black Bill's security in the transaction of his business, was the great service he rendered to politicians in times of pressing

need. It was a dull period indeed, when he could not furnish several hundred illegal voters—repeaters all —with which to decide the party balance in a doubtful election. Boss Hennessy probably was the only man in New York who was his superior in this line of patriotic endeavor.

Black Bill's place was a lazar-house for social lepers of many kinds, who unfortunately were not immured, but were permitted to roam about at will, much to the detriment of decent folk. It was a burrow in which the rats and foxes of the underworld found a secure hiding-place, when the usually apathetic police became aroused to the necessity of making good and showing the public that the guardians of its peace and safety really were "on the job." Their enthusiasm never went so far as to disturb Bill's dive, and if it so happened that any of its denizens had to be offered up on the altar of political virtue and criminal fraternity safety, Bill himself, on due notification, would "rap" on them and deliver them up to the "bulls."

A safe and secluded room for private conferences always was at the service of Black Bill's friends, and it was not without reason that Bull Hennessy selected it for the rendezvous with his henchman. The star-chamber room at Bill's joint received secrets as a deep well swallows stones. They went in but came not out again.

Promptly at the appointed hour, George, alias "Butch" Harris, alias "English Butch," alias the "Birmingham Strangler," arrived at Black Bill's. Making his business known to a large blonde female known as "Bill's moll," Butch was ushered into the conference chamber, lit his pipe and sat down to await the Boss.

George Harris was a man of forty-two or forty-three years of age. He was born in Birmingham, England, and until the age of twenty-five was a butcher by vocation and a second-rate prize-fighter by avocation. He finally renounced his business of meat-killing and cutting and engaged in pugilism as a more or less constant occupation.

Harris was a hard drinker when not in training, inclined to be belligerent outside of business hours and to "run amuck" on the slightest provocation—which is bad policy for the pugilist. In one of his tantrums he was unlucky enough to select for his abusive tactics the wrong party, a gentleman athlete, and was thoroughly whipped. He vowed vengeance and waylaying his conqueror one dark night, gave him a wallop over the head with a black-jack that very nearly killed him. For this assault with a deadly weapon, Butch was given a ten-year stretch in prison. He served his sentence and at the end of it was generously furnished free passage to America by a society working under surreptitious British government sanction and patronage, the business of which was to rid England of undesirable citizens by presenting them gratis to Uncle Sam.

Butch landed in New York, quickly grasped the political situation in that metropolis, and also noted the value and safety of a life of crime for wise persons. He first made himself valuable to the political powers and then, under their protection, soon became one of the most formidable strong-arm men that ever cursed New York. His specialty was garroting unwary pedestrians, and as he had a hug like a gorilla, the disasters that occasionally happened to the victims of his many "stickups" earned for him the appropriate sobriquet of the "Strangler."

By way of keeping in proper trim for his professional work, he occasionally practiced his old profession of pugilism on the side.

Noting Butch Harris's closely-cropped head, seamed with scars from many knuckles, constables' batons and roughly-applied bottles and beer glasses; his retreating forehead and protruding jaw, deep-set greenish gray eyes and shaggy brows, broad shoulders, stocky figure and enormous, heavy hands, one naturally would endeavor to avoid an acquaintance close enough to permit the thug to display his skill with his "maulies," or his ability to successfully shut off one's wind, break one's larynx, or even one's neck, with a strangle hold.

Promptly on time Hennessy entered Bill's doggery and stalked through the bar-room, indifferent alike to the sour fumes of stale beer, gin, fetid personal odors and tobacco smoke, and to the people who stood at the bar or lounged about the room.

As he passed the smoke and dust-begrimed bar, the "bottle-tosser" nodded in hospitable and deferential greeting. The Boss curtly returned the salutation.

A bleary-eyed, grey-whiskered old "soak," who just then was rising from the table on which he had been reposing his head and sleeping off the effects of Black Bill's "coffin-varnish," staggered in front of the Boss and was brushed aside as one might dispose of a yellow dog.

The bloated, senile wreck fell face downward on the floor, striking his head on a cuspidor, breaking that useful if not ornamental utensil and cutting a gash in his scalp from which the blood spouted merrily for a brief moment and then slowly trickled to the floor, to mingle with the sawdust and the re-

volting contents of the overturned cuspidor, in a huge nauseating, black and red and yellow splotch of filth—a veritable bit of "local color."

Hennessy was not wont to pick up his wounded. People who got in his way must needs take care of themselves. A down-and-out "lush," more or less, didn't count for much with him. Election time was a long way off and he had no orders for repeaters to fill. He therefore paid no attention to the fallen man.

The Boss strode on toward the inner sanctum, devoted to the devil and his chief works in black and red—and to the "long green." He turned at the door, nodded to the bar-keeper, and gave him the "high sign," by which it was understood that the great Boss Hennessy was not to be disturbed till further advices.

As the boss closed the door after him, one of the group of men who stood at the bar let his curiosity get the better of his discretion and addressed the bar-keeper.

"What's up, Jim? Looks like the Boss had a hen on."

The bar-keeper glared at the "butter-in" for a second, in emphatic rebuke that contained more than the suggestion of a threat.

"Dunno what you're drivin' at, Bo, but if you ain't damn careful you'll get some bad air into yer pipes. That gent's a stranger, what's rented the private room ter clip coupons in. See? An' that room ain't no chicken-coop, neither. D'ye get that?"

The man mumbled an apology and concealed his confusion by ordering drinks all around, which the "bottle-tosser" urbanely put on the slate—this being conservative enough, for Bill's patrons had no

homes but the dens of the underworld and no country but gang-land. The fellow who failed to settle his score soon had neither home nor country—unless he could show cause for default, in which case he was "taken care of" and his "face" was good until the fates sent some "cush" his way.

The poor old down-and-out was permitted to lie where he fell. He finally came to his senses, staggered to his feet and up to the bar, where he tried to work the house for a drink.

"Ah, go soak yer head, ye d——d bum!" said the bar-keeper.

"Come on, Jim," quavered the "lush," huskily. "Gimme just one more,—that's a good feller."

"Good feller, hell!" responded the bar-keeper hotly. They crucified a guy once fer bein' a good feller, an' I ain't takin' no chances. See? Here, Buck!" he called to a burly "strong arm," who served as bouncer and porter at Black Bill's when he was not "in stir" serving sentences. "Here's some trainin' fer ye. Lead him to it—an' give him plenty o' hoof."

The huge brute grinned from ear to ear.

"Jes' lamp me, Bo!"

The helpless old lush was rushed to the door and brutally kicked into the gutter! He lay there stunned and bleeding until a patrolman found him. The officer called a wagon, ran him in and he was booked as a "common"—very common—"drunk."

He was found dead in his cell the next morning! No autopsy was made—the police were wise and discreet as owls, the coroner's physician always was in a hurry and besides, hadn't the police surgeon made a diagnosis?

It would have been embarrassing if some meddle-

some doctor had insisted on making a post-mortem. The medical man might have babbled a lot of scientific jargon that would have crept into the newspapers.

Wouldn't it have been a "pretty howdy do," if the press had ignored the police surgeon's diagnosis and published something like this?

"Rupture of the middle meningeal artery from fracture of the temporal bone, followed by coma and death due to a large clot of blood pressing on the brain."

Very unmusical and quite complex. How much simpler and more comprehensible the verdict of an omniscient coroner's jury that has faith in the wisdom of a police surgeon's opinion, verified by a "doc" from the coroner's office.

"Died from alcoholism and exposure, with complicating infirmities of old age!"

Who ever quarrels with the entries on the blotter of a police station, or with coroner's records?

Butch Harris had just finished his pipe when Hennessy entered the room, seated himself facing his henchman and abruptly proceeded to business.

"Glad yer on time, Butch, I've got a job for ye."

"H'a particular job h'I s'pose," said "Butch," peering shrewdly at the Boss from beneath his mustache-like brows.

"Most particular—an' some special," replied Hennessy, grimly. The kind that won't stand any foolishness or mouth work. It's got to be underground. See?"

"H'I get ye, Boss, but wot's the lay?"

"There's a certain feller that's been walkin' on my grass, an' I want him cured o' the habit."

"Politics, graft or skoits?" grinned Butch.

"None o' yer damned business, Butch, but ye can call it politics—an' let it go at that."

"'Ow far d'ye want me ter go, Boss?"

"The limit. The gent needs a change of climate, an' you've got to do the prescribin' an' furnish the transportation—an' the sleepin car ticket. I want him bumped off. D'ye understand?"

"But, h'I say, Mr. 'Ennessy, that's comin' it a bit strong—h'I'm just h'out o' stir, ye know, an' I 'ad a damn close call fer a bloody long stretch."

"Yes, you chump!" snorted Hennessy, "an' how long did ye stay in—an' who got ye out? An' what would ha' happened to ye in court, first off, if I hadn't jollied the governor into wisin' up the bulls by pullin' the wires from Albany? A fat chance you had."

"That's easy h'answered," returned Butch, gratefully, "an' h'I'm not forgettin' 'oo came to the front fer me, but, say, Boss, h'I got 'old of a 'ot one in that mix-up with that blarsted bull, Steve 'Olland, last week!"

"Yes," sneered the Boss, "you're real clever—not! Instead o' makin' a clean getaway—as the boys tell me ye could ha' done—ye had to show fight an' break the bean o' one o' Chief Kerrigan's pet bulls."

"But the bleedin' beggar 'anded be a biff in the jaw, an' h'I'm not used to bein' 'anded one without 'andin' one back."

"You blitherin' idiot!" stormed Hennessy, "Why *didn't* ye hand him one back, instead o' bendin' yer gun over his head? He ain't out o' the hospital yet."

"W'ich is some consolation, blime me," said

Butch, grinning widely and showing his yellow, tobacco-stained teeth.

"Consolation, hell! It won't be much consolation for you if some o' them d——d bulls cuts loose with a gatt an' gits ye first an' collars ye afterward, one o' these fine days. There's a lot o' difference between bein' taken to the station in the hurry-up wagon an' bein' hauled to the morgue in an ambulance. D'ye git that, you infernal mutt?"

Butch sullenly shrugged his shoulders without replying.

"Now, see here, Butch," continued Hennessy, abruptly, rising and taking out his watch, "I didn't come here to argue with ye. I've got other fish ter fry, an' I'm goin' to quit this joint in just two minutes, by the watch. If you're willin' ter do the job, spiel, if ye ain't, then I'll find some red-blooded guy that will. An' by the way, don't forgit that I'm hep ter that little stick-up job over in Newark. That old geezer that you croaked was . . . . ."

"Sh—h! Fer Gawd's sake, Boss, don't talk so bloody loud!" Butch grew pale and looked around the room in fearful apprehension. "'Ow did ye know h'about that? h'I'll swear h'I never—'Oo the bloody 'ell wised you h'up ter——?"

"Of course ye didn't, Butch," and Hennessy laughed sardonically, "an' of course nobody put me wise—till you did just now. It looked like your work, an' I just guessed it was you that did the job. Say, Butch, but you're easy—a reg'lar mark!"

"But, h'on the level, Boss," whined Butch appealingly, "h'I didn't think h'about 'is bein' such a

h'old feller, any'ow, an' h'I didn't mean ter squeeze 'is blarsted neck so bloody 'ard."

"Bunk!" sneered Hennessy, "Say, Butch, on the dead—ye don't think ye can git by me with that squeal, do ye? If ye do, come out of it. Tell that to the jury, Butch," he mocked. "That old man was a mighty popular guy. He was mayor over there once, an' his folks has lots o' cush, believe me. I'd hate to see ye stretched, Butch, I really would!"

"Good Gawd! Ye wouldn't snitch h'on me, would ye?"—and Butch fairly grovelled.

"N—no; I don't—believe—I would," replied Hennessy, reflectively. "Anyhow, I'd hate ter have ter snitch on yer."

He looked at his watch.

"Time's up, Butch."

The Boss closed the time-piece, put it in his pocket and started for the door.

"'Old h'on, Boss," stammered Butch, shakily, "Cawn't ye wait a bit, an' give me time ter think it h'over?"

"Righto!" said Hennessy, as he resumed his chair. "Quit chewin' the rag and sit down and think it over—an' think d——d hard."

Butch regained his nerve in a moment.

"Well, wot's the job? Spit 'er out. 'Oo's the bloke ye wants me ter croak?"

"It's a feller up-river. He's on a railroad job at A . . . ., superintendin'."

"Railroad job! Superintendin'! W'y the bloody 'ell don't ye git 'is bloomin job, an' let it go h'at that?"

"That's my business. What I want is ter git him right. See?"

Butch astutely drew his own conclusions—in

which "skoits" occupied a prominent place. He made no comment, however; he was wise in some things.

"H'all right, Boss," he said, submissively, "give me the lay. Wot's 'is monicker, an' wot's 'e like w'en h'I lamps 'im?"

"His name's Parkyn. He's a feller about twenty-five years old, one o' them college-trained dudes —an' they're easy meat."

"H'is 'e 'usky?" asked Butch, with business-like caution.

"Oh, he's husky enough, but husky *is* as husky does, an' what them d——d cream-puff scrappers don't know about man-handlin' 'd fill a book. This job's a pipe."

Certain painful memories came to the surface of Butch's brain.

"Did ye ever tackle h'a real good one, Boss?" he queried. "H'I did wonst—h'an' wonst was a plenty fer George 'Arris, h'Esquire. 'E wan't no bloomin' pipe, *that* one! 'E give me wot for—put a 'ead h'on both 'is 'ands. Tell ye wot, Boss, h'I ain't 'ankerin' h'after no more o' them kind o' varsity blokes."

"Exceptions to all rules, Butch, an' I s'pose you always was a d——d fool at pickin' yer man, but what the hell? You're not goin' ter invite the feller to a pink tea stick-up, Queensberry rules ter govern, are ye? Yer goin' ter git him quick—an' cook him right."

"Does 'e carry a gatt?" inquired Butch.

"What in h——l d'ye expect, ye lobster? Nobody but a d——d mutt would be mixed up with them crazy-headed Dagoes workin' on that railroad job, without a gun! Buf ye ain't goin' ter be sucker

enough ter give him a chance ter use it, are ye?—an' ye ain't goin' ter use yer own smoke-wagon, either, if you've got any sense in yer bean. Get that? The river's handy an' there's some swift current up yonder. It's ter be a quiet job—one o' them mysterious disappearances. See?"

"Sure, Mike, an' that's wot it'll be, unless me bloody 'ands is wuss h'on the blink than they h'are this h'evenin'," and Butch proudly contemplated his enormous hairy paws. "They h'aint never missed fire yet, blime me if they 'ave—not never."

"No," said Hennessy, dryly, "but sometimes ye put too much powder behind 'em. But ye needn't be afraid o' that this time. Put in an extry charge an' do the job up brown."

"Trust me, Boss," growled Butch, "h'I'm some neat cooker h'I am. Wot d'ye want me ter do, go h'up yonder an' loaf around until h'I gits me chawnce h'at the blawsted bloke?"

"Rats! You're some wise guy, I don't think!" exclaimed Hennessy, disgustedly. "You'll git yer damn neck stretched yet! How long d'ye think ye'd be in that little jay town before every man, woman an' kid in the place 'd be on to ye an' rap ye to the bulls? Every one of 'em could identify ye, if it came ter a show-down.

"I've got it all doped out," Hennessy went on, "an' doped out right. You can get away with it dead easy, if ye don't go off half-cocked. Jack Halloran, the foreman on the job, told me the other day that some of his men had quit, an' that he could use ten or twelve more. I promised ter send 'em up—'twas me that contracted t' furnish the whole gang for that bit o' work. Nothin' ever gits past me on the little old Central. Well, I'll git a bunch together

an' slip you in with 'em an' send the lot o' ye up ter Halloran. See?"

"H'is this guy, 'Alloran, right?" asked Butch.

"Right? Hell!" snorted Hennessy, "He don't have to be right; though, for the matter o' that, he's on the square an' won't stand for any crooked work —nor any rough stuff, either. He ain't hep to me in this job, an' we don't want ter wise him up nor give him a diagram of it. He'll take the men I send him an' ask no questions, an' that's all we want out o' him."

"W'en d'ye want me to start, Boss?"

"Go to my North River office—in the mornin'—you know where it is—an' apply for a job. I'll not be seein' ye again, an' don't ye try ter git in touch with me after the job's done, until I send for ye. D'ye understand?"

"Right h'o. Want a report, Boss?"

"Not on yer life. I'll get all the dope I want out o' the papers. Git back to New York as quick as ye can, hunt yer hole an' lay low. You'll be safer here, an' if anything goes wrong, ye'll be where I can take care of it. Here, take this fer a retainer," and Hennessy handed Butch a roll of bills. "If ye make good, there's another wad o' bones waitin' fer ye, an' I'll see that it gits to ye, an' no questions asked. An' now, me bucko, pull yer freight, an' make it a quick sprint. Not afraid o' the dark, are ye?" he chuckled satirically. "If ye think ye need a chaperon, I'll git Bill's moll, Sally, ter show ye home."

"Nothin' doin,' Boss. Needn't bother de rag," grinned Butch, sheepishly, "H'I don't think h'anybody'll stick me h'up, if me 'ands 'olds h'out—any-'ow without gittin' rolled."

"All right then," said Hennessy brusquely. "Git a move on—an' good night to ye. Hold on there! Go out that way."

As Butch was about to pass out of the door designated by the Boss, which opened directly into the alley, Hennessy gave him a parting word of unquestionably sound advice.

"Say, Butch, don't do any more spielin' than ye can help. The bulls might trail ye by some o' them dropped h'aitches—an' one o' them h'aitches might drop on yer foot an' smash it."

"Don't worry, boss, h'I can talk h'Irish like a bloomin' Mick, an' not 'arf try, an' begorra," he continued, in a rich Irish brogue, "Oi'll be afther thryin' it on thim Dagoes."

"Good!" laughed Hennessy, "You've missed yer callin'. Harry Hill 'll catch ye, if ye don't watch out."

" 'Arry'll 'ave ter be smarter'n them blarsted bulls h'if 'e does," chuckled Butch, as he closed the door behind him.

Hennessy lit a cigar and sat gloomily smoking for a few moments and then passed out into the dark alley by the same door that had given exit to Butch. As he reached the street, a few rods away, he muttered vindictively, "I reckon I've about fixed your clock for ye, Mr. Bob Parkyn."

Chapter VI

THE STRIKE

The year 1877 was a gloomy and eventful one in the industrial and economic history of the United States. It marked with blood and fire the record of the war between capital and labor in America, a struggle in which even the wisest man could not form a just opinion of the proportions of right and wrong in the contentions of the two parties to the controversy.

With increasing numerical strength and power of labor unions, had come a more bitter resentment on the part of the wage-earning proletariat against the increasing aggressions of the large corporations and capitalistic interests and the obvious injustices heaped by them upon the working classes.

Capital had been the national bully since the country put aside its swaddling clothes and became a nation among nations. The peevish and hungry child whom capital had been wont to spank and starve into submission had grown up—labor had discovered that it, too, had power. Labor had begun likewise to comprehend that the capitalistic tail had been wagging the industrial dog—the worker. Capital still insisted that it was the dog and not the tail and proposed to continue to do the wagging.

Labor also had come to the just conclusion that it was entitled to something more than the wherewith-

al to remain on the earth—the mere food and shelter to which even the domestic animals are entitled.

There seemed to be at least three versions of the Lord's prayer—two for the rich and one for the poor.

"Give us this day our daily bread" would have been a very pretty living formula for the poor man, if the Lord really had responded to his modest request, or even if it had not been interpreted by the capitalist as "Please, Mr. Capitalist, let us work for you for our daily bread, part of the time. We of course should starve the rest of the time."

Labor possibly might have been more reconciled to the foregoing widely different versions of the Lord's prayer if the wealthy class had not formulated a special version for themselves, which read: "Give us, O, Lord, our daily cake, pie, champagne and oysters, broiled lobsters and deviled crabs, our grand opera, costly equipages and gay habiliments, for we, O, Lord, are thine annointed."

Human nature is just about the same on both sides of any given social, economic or religious fence, and labor, like capital, no sooner felt that it had arrived at some degree of development and strength than the irritability of its protest against injustice increased an hundredfold.

"Capital must be taught its lesson; capital must sit up and take notice; capital must make terms with labor"—and so a new bully came to the fore and labor began to seek for bones of contention with the capitalistic bully who for so long had claimed for his very own this fair land and the fulness thereof.

No rebellion is logical throughout—the rebel often runs *amok*—and every industrial or capitalistic tyrant is dangerous to the peace of mind of any com-

munity where there is no strong and impartial hand to fairly and squarely adjust differences.

There never has been in this country any effective agency to preserve harmony in our industrial and capitalistic relations. The politicians who run the government—municipal, state or general—are too busy listening to the seductive blandishments of capital on the one hand, and setting traps to catch the votes of labor gudgeons on the other—in many instances in working their own little schemes of graft—to trouble themselves about the relative justice of crucial situations in the industrial world, hence social turmoil, reactionary movements, strikes, riots, hunger, crime and vice ever wait upon industrial crises in this country—as in every other the world over, where there exists the struggle of mass against class.

Possibly it is too much to expect that governments, most of which are so anarchistic, stupid and cruel that war still is the bogey man of all nations and wholesale murder a fine art, should show intelligence in industrial regulation.

Governments have billions upon billions for war. The masses, noting this, one day will ask: "Why, then, should there be poverty, idleness and unemployment in the world?" And governments will be at some trouble to explain; lacking both explanation and apology, they will fall, to be succeeded by a new régime of greater humanity and higher intelligence.

Even in these later and better days, when it is beginning to dawn upon men that neither capital nor labor can stand alone, and that the brotherhood of man is close to the fatherhood of God—and the only rational foundation for social betterment—ser-

ious troubles arise from time to time. Not yet is there a strong and wise hand to separate the fighting under and upper dogs, dispense equity in their social and economic relations, and guide them into the paths of peace and harmony that lead to the feast of reason and of justice—to the haven of hope for the weary and heavy-laden, where the picket and the scab shall cease from troubling and the slugger shall be as a playful, milk-white lamb; where there shall be work for willing hands and every hand shall be willing; where all shall be given their daily bread in a living wage and each shall get his daily rest—and at least as much of the innocent pleasures of life as does a valuable domestic animal.

The church has not greatly helped the social and economic underdog—neither the Lord's poor, the devil's poor nor the poor devil—it merely has fed him theologic "soothing syrup"—thus officiating as the natural ally and beneficiary of the moneyed class. The poor man has been cajoled, for lo! these many generations, by the promise of "mansions in the skies," in which the rich man cannot share—it being "easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for the rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven." Riches being of no value elsewhere than here on earth—a fact which the fellow who lacks them keenly appreciates—the underdog's faith in a glorious hereafter has not been greatly enhanced by the celestial boycott of the wealthy.

Slowly but surely has a consciousness of the fraud that has been put upon them permeated the minds of those whose bread must be earned by the sweat of their brows. They gradually have awakened to the fact that, while the laborer is conceded to be "worthy of his hire," he is thrice welcome to his

"tire"—and some people fain would limit him to that.

Socialism has done something for humanity, and might have done more—for every altruist is to a certain degree socialistic—but like every other *doctrinaire,* the "dyed in the wool" socialist takes himself and his creed too seriously and tries to mold every human interest and thought to his own academic theories. A creed "in the saddle" is merely despotism in a new form.

Like the religionist, the scientist, the politician and the party-member in politics, the would-be social reformer who allows himself to be indelibly labeled, has lost his intellectual manumission papers, is the slave of his "brand" and, albeit unconsciously, an obstructionist.

Society is a sick man, but for him there is no panacea—and no remedy, save a higher standard of human intelligence acquired through the slow process of evolution. The social doctor with a panacea and the revolutionist alike are dangerous.

Poor old Russia! Caught between a small group of idealists and fanatics and a huge mass of poverty-stricken, erstwhile booze-sodden, priest-ridden, ignorant, semi-barbarians, is a spectacle for gods and men. Whatever of good there may be in the new régime is likely to be engulfed in the blood and fire incidental to the attempt of a coterie of ill-balanced minds to force their theories down the throats of unready millions—who will remain unready until evolution gradually has illumined the furthermost recesses of their semi-barbaric minds.

No individual idealist, nor any group of idealists, has brains enough to handle a practical problem so huge as that of making healthy the social giant, and

if the social quacks are not careful, they will so overdose him that his condition will become malignant and fatal. Social progress, like a substantial house, is slowly built up a brick at a time—it can be destroyed *en masse* in a moment.

There is no difference in principle, between the governmental anarchists who make bloody and inhuman wars, and the individual anarchists who throw bombs. Both are social, moral and economic destructionists, who crack the thin veneer of civilization and show that we all are barbarians under the skin.

Female suffrage is destined to acomplish wonders of social advancement. When woman once is thoroughly awakened she will battle for the home, for the full dinner pail and for clean wholesome habitations; for cleanliness, fresh air and wholesome food for the babies; she will fight against the booze that wrecks health and morals; she will fight for substitutes for the doggeries and gin-mills that once were the poor man's clubs—because, forsooth, he had no others—above all, she will fight for woman's right to be guarded from the peril of disease that reaches out its horrid claws and fangs from the red-light district to cripple or destroy her and to blind, wreck or destroy her babies. She will fight for the right to guard herself—her "natural protector," man, has failed her.

Popular educational enlightenment through a fearless, though small, fragment of the public press has accomplished marvels, but not until the government has discovered and taught the people that this fair land of ours belongs to no class and is not for exploitation by the few at the expense of the many, and that proper and harmonious relations between

capital and labor pay best in the end, will our country be free from assaults upon the equal rights of citizenship, "guaranteed" by the Constitution, and from social and industrial upheavals. Not till then will the automobiles of the rich, whether idle or voraciously industrious, cease to run by the sweat of the toiling and suffering millions, exuded in honest, albeit underpaid, toil. Not till then will the strike picket, the slugger, the walking delegate and the capitalist alike cease to say: "Thou shalt not work, save by my permission."

The great railroad strike that began in July, 1877, was a culmination of a series of differences between the labor unions and the railroads. It was one of the earliest of the great struggles for human liberty and simple justice in the industrial fields of this country—one of the first supreme tests of strength between aggregated wealth and power, and labor.

Much property was destroyed and much blood was shed. Many outrages were committed on both sides and alas! the momentous questions at issue were not even then destined to be finally settled, as witness the Homestead strike in 1892, and the great railroad strike in 1894, which paralyzed business, destroyed millions of dollars of property, cost many valuable lives and caused untold suffering, and in which one great democrat, Grover Cleveland, clashed with another and greater democrat, John P. Altgeld, both men proving themselves to be moral heroes, doing their duty according to their lights—and both being right in the premises and under the then existing conditions.

Still later came the miners' war in Colorado, and the awful conditions prevailing in the mining dis-

trict of West Virginia, where we beheld the all too familiar spectacle of government aiding the capitalistic Shylock in his eager quest of the industrial pound of flesh. Would that the capitalistic Shylock had been content with his portion of flesh—but no, he demanded his oceans of blood and tears, drawn from old men, weak women, babes and cripples—and now the worm has turned; labor has climbed into the saddle and bids fair to ride to the devil.

The railroad war was spreading rapidly. The tie-up was fast becoming general, and the press reports were causing great unrest among the men employed on the Central at A . . ., when there came the news of the clash in Pennsylvania between the strikers and the militia. The crack military organization of a certain large city had been marooned in a round-house, until it suited the humor of the strikers to force the soldiers to capitulate and lay down their arms, after which the mob had chased them in ignominious flight to the very gates of their home city, much as the troops who fought those other rebels at Bull Run were driven back to the national capital, in utter rout and complete disgrace.

The victory over the military was the last straw that broke the back of the law-and-order camel. The flood gates of riot and disorder were opened and the war became general all over the country. The strikers, with the exhilarating smell of battle in their nostrils, and flushed with temporary success, grew more and more exacting and turbulent than ever.

The experienced foreman, John Halloran, had seen the storm coming and knew that he soon would have to submit to the inevitable, and that he must

maintain as friendly relations as possible between the road and its humble employes on the construction work, if he would save life and property. He feared not man or devil, but he felt that the situation he was about to face was one to be handled by diplomacy, not by force. Fortunately the stalwart foreman was popular with the hands, which made his task of keeping his men in good humor much easier than it otherwise would have been.

In Bob Parkyn, Halloran found a courageous, intelligent and willing aid. The men liked and respected the young superintendent. They knew that he was no feather-bed soldier of industry. They knew also that he was fearless and able to cope with any situation requiring nerve and muscle, as several turbulent fellows had discovered to their cost. His influence therefore was of great assistance to the foreman in keeping the men satisfied and good natured.

But the inevitable happened. A walking delegate of the railroad laborers' union arrived one evening, and when midnight came, by great industry had most of the men lined up for the strike. By ten o'clock next morning every man had been won or frightened over, and, at a signal from the agitator, dropped his tools and quit work.

"Well, Mr. Parkyn, it's come at last," said Halloran glumly to the young superintendent. "I wish it could ha' been staved off for a week or two longer. We'd ha' been in pretty good shape to play a waitin' game and let the thing simmer until the fire went out—as it surely will before long. The poor devils" —he looked cautiously around to see if there was any danger of being overheard—"Well; they ain't en-

tirely wrong, anyway you can figure it, but an empty belly is an awful obstacle to a man's gettin' his rights."

"Let us be thankful that the men are good-natured and peaceable. It's merely a sympathetic strike on the part of our felows, anyway," commented Parkyn.

"They're peaceable enough so far, but wait till they get hungry," returned Halloran. "Believe me, Mr. Parkyn, if anything ever does start there's goin' to be hell to pay an' no pitch hot. Every man jack o' them Guineas totes a gun or stiletto—an' he don't carry it for any decorative purposes either. They're holy terrors in a scrap, once they get started, an' when their blood's up, they'd shoot their own brothers or sock a knife into their own grandmothers. Scrap! You just bet they can scrap, an' don't you forget it! They're good-natured enough when you let 'em alone an' don't get 'em mad, or jealous over a woman, but if you do they're bughouse sure. They run a—— What is it them niggers over in Asia does when they get crazy on some kind o' hop they eat in that God-forsaken country?"

"You mean the Malays," answered Parkyn. "As they say over there, when the brown-skinned beggars get full of hasheesh, they run *'amok'* and take a stab at everybody in sight."

"That's it—much obliged, Mr. Parkyn," continued the foreman. "Well, as I was sayin', when them foreign fellers get riled an' run amuck, there's things a doin'. 'Twouldn't be so bad if they'd only fight fair, once in a while, but guns and knives for a steady habit is rotten work. Get into a mixup with one o' them ginks, an' unless you get him quick

an' get him good, it's all day with you. He'll get *you* sure, either right then an' there, or later, when you ain't lookin, an' ain't expectin' no trouble.

"An' that's not the worst," Halloran went on; "the black-faced cusses stand together like a lot o' them Five Points gangsters, or a parcel o' d——d Chinamen. You can't get anything out of 'em, except jabber. They won't give up nothin'. State's evidence don't go with them, not a bit of it. They take shootin' an' stabbin' as part o' their constitutional rights, an' as the fellers who do the stunts, an' most o' the fellers that gets hurt, is all in the fam'ly, they think it's nobody's business but their own. As for the guy outside o' the family who gets a Dago's knife or bullet into him, why—what the hell?" and the foreman spat disgustedly over the railing of the veranda.

"It would seem, Mr. Halloran," replied Bob, "that there's really nothing else to do but to sit tight and jolly the men into continued good behavior. I hope that walking delegate party will get away before he stirs up trouble. Confound the fellow! I'd like to put him on a hand-car and make him pump his own way back to New York."

"So would I, Mr. Parkyn," growled the foreman, morosely, "but I don't think it would be safe to try it. Walkin' delegates and prophets musn't be monkeyed with—unless you want a row with their disciples. There's another chap I'm more afraid of than I am o' that walkin' delegate, an' that's O'Connor, a feller who came up last week with the batch o' new men."

"O'Connor? Don't believe I've noticed him. What sort of looking fellow is he?" asked Parkyn.

"He's a tough-lookin' bird all right. There he

goes now—you can size him up for yourself," and the scowling foreman nodded his head toward a man who was just slouching past.

"So that's O'Connor, eh?" asked Parkyn.

"Yes; anyway that's what he calls himself. But if he's an Irishman, I'm a Chinaman. He drops an aitch every once in a while, like any cockney. His brogue is a fake, I'm thinkin'. I'll bet even money he's a crook."

"That's odd," mused the superintendent; "wonder what he's up to?"

"Nothin' professional, I reckon. This town would be pretty poor pickin' for a New York gun. Perhaps he's some feller that Hennessy sent up here for the 'good of the order,' as we say in lodge. He has a raft o' tough mugs lookin' after his political fences. Then the police may want O'Connor. The boss has a lot o' friends an' hangers-on like that."

"Which may explain his being an Irish-Englishman, Mr. Halloran," laughed Parkyn.

"Yes, an' also his tryin' to stir up trouble. That kind has to be doin' some sort o' dirty work to keep well, an' if I'm next to him, an' I'll bet I am, time must be hangin' pretty heavy on his hands up here. Honest labor's mighty tryin' to his kind."

The man alluded to just then turned squarely toward the two so that they got a full view of him.

"Holy smoke!" exclaimed Halloran, "look at them hands and shoulders—an' that lovely mug! His face looks like a map o' the Five Points!"

The man noticed that he was under observation and nonchalantly putting his hands in his pockets, lazily slouched away, whistling a popular air, and was lost in the crowd of workmen gathered on the river bank.

Butch had carried out the boss's instructions to the letter. He had landed at A . . . smoothly enough and was put to work with the rest of the gang. His liking for his prospective job of strong-arm work, which was not any too ardent at the start, was not increased by the ride up river on the work-train of the Central with a lot of jabbering "Guineas" whose language was unintelligible to him. Although usually about as timid and vacillating as a bulldog, when on a job from which his low cunning could eliminate all danger to himself, Butch did not set about his present mission with any degree of assurance. His recent narrow escape from doing a stretch for the Jersey City job had temporarily shaken him up pretty badly. He never did take philosophically the accidents and vicissitudes of his profession.

By the time the thug arrived in A . . . his feet were as cold as those of an amateur preparing to "stick up" his first "boob." They did not grow warmer as time passed without an opportunity to carry out his designs upon the young superintendent.

Honest physical labor is very depressing to men of the Harris type. Their fibre, while apparently strong, is not adapted to the continued effort, and novelty of muscular exertion is very fatiguing. Although he soldiered on the job, Butch felt that he was undergoing a punishment like unto work on the rock pile at "the island." This did not add to the strength of the thug's resolution to fulfill his contract with Bull Hennessy, nor to his respect for boobs who work for their daily bread.

Another factor in undermining his resolution, now so "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought," was

his inborn streak of "yellow." Men like Butch Harris always are rank dung-hills at bottom.

Under some conditions the sons of Ishmael are like children in the dark, afraid of their shadows. The sense of being hunted and belonging to the unpopular and hated minority in a world that resents his getting a living by his wits—a living which he justly believes is coming to him without his giving in return the conventional *quid pro quo* of social and individual service—finally gets on the nerves of the boldest criminal.

Then, too, Butch Harris was lonesome; and who is not depressed by loneliness? Among the people about him there was not one kindred spirit, and men of his type need the stimulus of companionship of their own evil kind. They need the crowd-courage of association with brothers of their own profession in its various branches. Even the soldier, marching into action, gets inspiration and courage from the touch of his comrades' elbows. That is why the average man is a hero on the battle field—and nowhere else.

The predatory animal, however fierce, who is attacked by an enemy, is thrice armed when he knows that his own lair is near, for there lies safety, if he can but reach it. The sneaking fox is boldest near his burrow. The criminal also likes to keep close to his base.

The large city is the crook's choice of base, for there he has many lairs, many burrows, and dens where only a thief can catch a thief and where comrades stand together, because they must. Ages and ages ago, criminals well learned the lesson that "those who have" are opposed, not only to the individual criminal, but to all criminals. Even in the

childhood of this time-worn world, the Children of Ishmael instinctively banded together in an offensive and defensive alliance against law-abiding folk that will last till the human race itself is no more.

Another lesson which is taught the criminal early in his professional career is the old one that "dead men tell no tales." Honest people are not the only ones who mysteriously disappear forever, or are found in the river or in dark corners of our large cities, dead of causes and persons "unknown." In the underworld there also is the apparently impromptu brawl and the shot or the stab with a clean "get-away" for the murderer of his fellow crook. The wages of "snitching" is death, and there are as many ways of disposing of informers in crookdom as there are of skinning the traditional cat.

The new and strange environment in which Butch Harris found himself was disturbing in another respect. In New York there was the atmosphere of official protection and tolerance that is so essential to crime, politics, and a well-regulated and prosperous police system, which was lacking in A . . .

Butch knew that in the matter of criticism of bad behavior, "rubes," as his class termed citizens of small towns, often were men of quick-working perspicacity who were wont to go straight to the mark. This directness and lack of intelligent appreciation of opportunities for graft sometimes pervaded the entire legal system in rural districts, affecting constables, judges and prosecuting attorneys alike. He of course over-rated the social purity and square-dealing spirit of rural communities, and Boss Hennessy had not deemed it prudent to "put him wise."

The nearness of A . . . to Sing Sing possibly

had something to do with disturbing the morale of Mr. Harris. The gentleman with the many aliases had noted that the prison was frightfully near, and it was so suggestive, not only of long "stretches," but also of short ones with the artistic slip-knot under a gentleman's left ear!

Butch found himself reconciled to the lack of opportunity to "cook" young Parkyn. He even had begun to frame up excuses for a complete failure, wondering the while how he ever could explain his "fluke" to Boss Hennessy's satisfaction, when luck smiled on him once more. The strike came and gave him an opportunity to mature a plan that had been slowly crystallizing in his mind for some days, and in furtherance of which he had been doing his best to create dissatisfaction and excite animosities among his *soi disant* fellow workmen.

Recalling numerous brawls in lower New York, into which marked men had been drawn and out of which they emerged, feet first, on a stretcher *en route* to the morgue, Butch decided to change the program mapped out by Hennessy. In coming to this decision he felt confident that, if he succeeded in getting his man, the Boss would be so well satisfied with results that he would not question the method employed—which method was a popular and effective one in Mr. Hennessy's own bailiwick and occasionally had been of great service to that astute person himself.

The more he thought about it the more attractive to the crook seemed the plan by which he hoped to get somebody else to pull his chestnuts out of the fire. The prospect which the plan offered of a clean get-away without the least risk of being caught "with the dead sheep over his shoulder," was par-

ticularly attractive, even fascinating to Butch, and moreover, it was so clever in conception, so artistic in method and bade fair to be so satisfactory in results that it appealed to his professional pride. Above all—and this loomed large on the Strangler's mental horizon—it was so safe, if he only could "pull it h'off without a 'itch."

Chapter VII

TROUBLE BEGINS BREWING

For several days after the strike was called at A . . . an atmosphere of peace and quiet pervaded the village. It was as if the proverbial colorless Sunday of the little old-fashioned burg had been continued into the week.

The majestic Hudson still flowed placidly on its way to the sea, the foliage on the mountains was as vividly green as of yore and the same blue summer haze, above which floated foam-white clouds, hung lazily about the mountain tops as of old.

The birds sang in the trees as blithely as ever, and the tall, many-colored, democratic hollyhocks in the little front yards of the cottages fringing the river road, sleepily nodded their hearty approval of the summer of their sweet content.

Nature concerns not herself with the affairs of mankind. His hopes, fears, joys, sorrows, and his economic and other social disturbances are naught to her. If her foolish children cannot agree as to what constitutes a living wage, she does not worry. She gave him a heart to feel for his fellow-man and a brain to govern that heart, and if he chooses to harden the one and obliquely reason with the other, what cares she?

If man elects to deny his lowly brother the wherewithal to feed the hungry mouths of his woman and

children and protect them and himself from "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," Nature smiles or frowns, as the mood pleases her, unmindful of the oppressions and sorrows of her human creatures.

If the under-dog in the battle of life chooses to combat the upper-dog by adding to his own woes, whilst trying to get a fighting chance to lessen those woes, Nature is content to be a disinterested bystander, attending strictly to her own affairs.

Long, long before Puck, the philosopher, wise creature of Shakespeare's brain—or was it Bacon's?—Mother Nature watched the passing human show and cried, "What fools these mortals be!"

"Fools?" Aye, what helpless fools the sun and moon and stars of heaven have shone upon since the natal day of this worn old world!

What fools have caressed or been caressed, killed or been killed!

What fools have rains beaten upon, fires consumed and waters drowned!

What fools have trodden upon the necks of other fools, who have turned like the traditional worm and bitten the heel that would destroy them!

What fools have said, "I am not my brother's keeper"—and what other fools have cried, "Thou art thy brother's keeper and he will strike and show thee!"

Nature was as indifferent to the troubles of the sons of toil at A . . ., of the corporation most concerned and of the public—the ultimate victim of every economic and social disturbance—as she ever has been to humanity's woes from the beginning.

Strike? What knows she of strikes—and what cares she?

Wages? What are wages to her? She pays no wages save those of sin, and they nourish and clothe neither women nor babes, but take the bread from out their mouths.

The people of the village had returned to their usual lethargy and their interest in strikes and strikers had fallen to zero. Figuratively, when the strike first was called they "sat up and looked around" with languid interrogation, but as soon as it seemed evident that there was nothing exciting in the wind, they completely lost interest and lapsed into their ordinary placid satisfaction with the world and everything in it.

Even the mongrel dogs of the streets were lazier than was their habit. They knew nothing of economic disturbances and cared less, and the strikers interested them not at all. The bones that the laborers had thrown to them—like the bones which capital had thrown to the men themselves—had been so cleanly picked that the railroad hands had not favorably impressed the town dogs, hence there had been no bond of sympathy between them and the workmen. If the canines thought about the matter at all, the strike probably did not appeal to them as affecting their own selfish interests—an attitude which would have been nearly human.

For a time the strikers in general were as peaceful and orderly as the most exacting, law-abiding citizen could have wished. Some of the more unstable of the motley elements comprising the railroad gang were, it is true, a bit fiery in their remarks and gesticulations whenever the men gathered in little knots to discuss the situation. This was not remarkable, however, in an aggregation of men in

the veins of most of whom ran the warm and temperamentally excitable blood of the Latin or of the Slavonic races.

John Halloran aptly, if facetiously, expressed the situation to Superintendent Parkyn in this wise:

"Some o' them fellers, especially the Guineas, couldn't talk at all if their hands was tied, anyhow, without usin' every muscle in their bodies; no more'n a Chatham street Jew could show a suit of clothes to a customer without workin' his mouth an' everything else that's movable at the same time—unless you chloroformed him. One time I saw a feller grab one o' them Jews, who was tryin' to sell a coat to him, by his mitt, an' the Jew was struck dumb as an oyster. He didn't round up again until the feller let go, so that Ikey could get in his hand-work again."

"Perhaps you are right," rejoined Parkyn, thoughtfully, "but I'm beginning to be a trifle worried, just the same. Time will be hanging pretty heavily on their hands before this strike is over, and those lads are likely to get to drinking too much. I've seen a number of them today who were a bit soused. Idleness, as the old proverb says, is the Mother of Mischief, and when she's married to a grievance—and most of those fellows think, more or less justly, that they have a fine assortment of grievances—a dangerous brood of emphatic protests is likely to result. A few ugly strikers form a fine nucleus for an uncontrollable mob.

"There's another thing that bothers me," continued Parkyn. "Have you noticed O'Connor's actions?"

"O'Connor?" queried Halloran. D'ye mean that fake Irishman that I said drops his aitches?"

"Yes, that's the man."

"What's he been doin'?" asked the foreman, with a hostile glint in his eye.

"Well, I wouldn't like to swear that he actually has done anything, yet," replied Parkyn, "but, unless I'm greatly mistaken, he's trying to foment trouble among the men. Then, too, he's standing treat a little oftener than looks natural for an ordinary laborer. He seems to be spending more money than a hard-working Irish railroad hand reasonably should have in his possession."

"So?" answered Halloran interestedly, "I wonder if by any chance he's a union agent, working on the quiet."

"Possibly, Mr. Halloran, but, whatever he is, he's acting very suspiciously. There he is now, making a speech to that group of men on the pier. I may be wrong, but I don't think he's either preaching to them, or the other extreme, discussing politics."

For a moment Halloran surveyed the group and the man indicated; and then said slowly:

"He don't seem to be holdin' a Salvation Army meetin', that's a fact. Reckon I'd better be strollin' down there an' get into the game. I might hear somethin' interestin'—about myself, like as not," and the foreman laughed as he started toward the pier.

" Be careful, Halloran, don't apply the match to the fuse," warned Parkyn. "If that fellow's up to mischief, he'd like nothing better than to have you give him a grievance."

"Never fear, Mr. Parkyn, I'll not be startin' anythin.' That fake Irishman 'd better not start anythin' either. If he does, I'll finish it by changin' his map for him. I don't like him any too well, anyhow, an' I wouldn't mind handin' him a wallop

an' turnin' his block t'other way round. See you later—at the hotel."

Resolved to put in his own oar if trouble really started, Parkyn watched the foreman narrowly as the latter strolled leisurely down to the pier and engaged O'Connor in conversation. He plainly saw from the actions of the two that Halloran was having some difficulty in controlling his temper. He noted also that the men in the group looked on sullenly, some of them scowling with evident hostility at the foreman.

Halloran concluded his errand and repaired to the hotel veranda, where he was joined by the young engineer.

"It's dollars to doughnuts that you're right, Mr. Parkyn," said the foreman, "that fellow is a trouble-maker sure, an' he's been gettin' in his fine work. I had troubles of me own, keepin' me hands tied behind me back whilst I was talkin' to him. I could ha' had a scrap with the blackguard without half tryin'—if I had defended the corporations an' th' aristocracy, which he was layin' out for the benefit of them Guineas. They probably couldn't tell what he was drivin' at, but they're ready to cry 'down' with anything and everybody that anybody sicks 'em onto," and he chuckled at the humor of the thing.

"He's a tough mug, if I know the signs," continued Halloran, "an' he looks as if he could go some himself. The men he's talkin' to are pretty sour, an' some o' those wops have got quite a package aboard, this very minute. We're in for trouble before we get through, sure as shootin'."

"Let us hope that we're both wrong, Halloran," replied Parkyn, "but we'd better keep wide awake

and on the job right along. It won't do to be caught napping."

"Right you are, Mr. Parkyn. An' be the same token, I'm mighty glad Maggie ain't here just now."

"So am I," coincided Parkyn, soberly. "This town will be no place for young ladies, if those fellows once start after trouble.

"By the way, Halloran," he went on, earnestly, "I wonder if we could induce the powers that be in this little burg, to close that groggery of Hanton's until the strike is over."

The young engineer had no wide range of experience behind him, but he had seen enough of the world to know that when time hangs heavily on the hands of men who have no intellectual resources, they take to liquor as naturally as a duck does to water.

"Close Hanton's doggery!" exclaimed Halloran, "why, you might as well try to close up Wall Street. Everybody knows it's a nest o' swindlers an' bunk artists, but if anybody ever tries to close it, he'll have the time of his life. New York likes the excitement o' speculatin' an' it helps circulate the money. Besides, there's politics behind it. Same here in this little old one-horse place."

The foreman laughed satirically.

"I dare say," he continued, "that if the truth was known, Hanton's landlord is a deacon in the church. Anyhow, that dump is political headquarters for this neck o' the woods. Shut up Hanton's joint? Forget it, my friend—forget it! We'll get plumb up against it, if we try to hand out any o' that blue-nose dope here."

"All the same, I propose to try it," replied Par-

kyn, determinedly. "I'm going to call on the authorities this afternoon, and then, if I get no satisfaction, I'll visit Brother Hanton himself, and see if I can do a little missionary work with him."

"Blaze away, me friend—I like yer nerve," rejoined Halloran, cynically, "but it'll get you nothin' from the authorities but a frost, an' nothin' from Hanton, unless it's a laugh—or p'raps worse, for he's some grouch, take it from me, an' has a temper cut on th' bias out o' the brittlest piece o' thin green glass you ever saw splintered.

"By the way, Mr. Parkyn," he asked, "do you by any chance happen to have a gun on ye?"

"No," replied the young man, in astonishment, "I never thought of such a thing! I always have felt perfectly able to take care of myself without weapons."

"I thought as much," said Halloran grimly, "Come up to me room an' I'll fit ye out right. If anything is started among them fellers yonder,"—he pointed to another and larger group of the men who had gathered about O'Connor, and his face grew stern; "it won't be any foot-ball game, an' you'll find that somethin' more than a good job o' manhandling 'll be needed; even if we had enough help to risk puttin' it over—which the Lord knows we hain't."

The foreman led the way to his room where he procured a revolver, which, after some persuasion, he induced Parkyn to accept.

"There," he said proudly, "that's more like it. That baby hain't got a bore like the Hoosac tunnel, but it's big enough. If weight o' artillery don't count, an' you can shoot straight, you're heeled fit for the Five Points."

"I can shoot with the best of them," the young man quietly assured him, putting the gun into the outside pocket of his coat, "but I hope to the Lord there'll be no occasion to make good. By the way, Halloran, how many men can you really depend on in case of trouble?"

Halloran's jaws clamped together like those of a steel trap.

"Just two, if I can read the signs right—Mr. Robert Parkyn and one Jack Halloran," he returned, significantly.

"Is it really that serious?"

Halloran eyed Parkyn keenly.

"Yes; but if you feel——"

"Afraid?" interjected Parkyn, steadily. "No, I'm not afraid. I was merely thinking what a mess my first important assignment is likely to be, and—well, I was thinking how awful it would be if anyone should get seriously hurt."

"Sure; it would be awful," retorted Halloran, doggedly, "but just make up your mind to go through—and go through with a whole skin, even if you have to hurt some o' them blackguards on the way," and with lowering brows the foreman shot a look in O'Connor's direction that boded ill for the fellow if he chanced to run against Halloran and did not exercise his own peculiar talents first and "beat him to it."

Parkyn called on the mayor that afternoon, and as Halloran had intimated that he would, received cold comfort from that pompous, bewhiskered official, who took full advantage of his opportunity to impress upon "one o' them New Yorkers" the importance and dignity of his own position of grand mogul of the village. He took special pains to assure

his visitor that he was the "whole works" of that immediate vicinity; that he most emphatically knew his business and did not propose to permit any transient visitor to give him post-graduate instruction therein. As to the preservation of law and order, he sarcastically submitted that he never had been compelled to ask any outsider for assistance in the performance of his official duties, and thought he would be able to struggle along without it for a while longer.

The most telling point made by the mayor, in his own estimation, was that Mr. Hanton was a taxpayer, a law-abiding citizen, and kept a highly prosperous and respectable establishment which was of great commercial and social value to the village. By no means could he offend him and his large, reputable, orderly, respectable, intelligent and influential clientéle by even so much as hinting to the aforesaid prominent citizen that closing his "buffet" would in the slightest degree be desirable.

While not fully, much less cordially, appreciating all the points made by the chief executive of the town, Parkyn grasped the main features of the situation, to wit: First, that the officials and citizens of small dots on the map were not unlike those of larger and more important places. They needed the money and knew a good thing when they saw it: Second, and more important, that for aught he himself had accomplished by his visit to the town hall, the joint in question was likely to run wide open until the frost touched the pumpkins in Hades.

The reception given the young engineer by the eminent Mr. Hanton and his bottle-tosser, a truculent, boiled-lobster-hued, beefy-fisted individual who,

naturally enough, was named Mike—more familiarly known as "Big Mike"—was as warm as the mayor's reception was cold.

Having introduced himself, Parkyn briefly made known his business. The atmosphere immediately became, as the cow-men of the great West would express it, "some hostyle."

On learning his visitor's mission, Hanton very nearly had an apoplectic fit. His rubicund face became purple; he glared for a moment in speechless wrath at the young man and then, after a preliminary sputter that sounded like a huge tom-cat spitting defiance at a rival on the back fence, cut loose with a stream of profanity that excelled anything Parkyn ever had heard.

Despite his unfamiliarity with some of the gentleman's phrases—originality of language was the saloon-keeper's strong point—the young man had no difficulty in comprehending that Mr. Hanton was distinctly peeved by the unwarranted attempt to interfere with a decent and law-abiding citizen's laudable endeavor to get an honest living for himself and family.

How far Hanton might have carried his protest is a matter of conjecture. He appeared to be doubling his formidable fists and gathering himself together for a spring over the bar at the intruder upon the peace and quiet of his place of business, when the redoubtable Mike, brandishing a bung-starter he had picked up as a measure of preparation for any emergency that might arise, relieved the tension of the situation.

"Fade away, young feller! Fade away!—an' don't let us keep ye!" he bawled ferociously. "We

can run this joint without any o' your help. See? Chase yourself, Mr. Buttinsky, before ye finds yerself standin' on yer bloody nut!"

As a number of the guests seemed to coincide with Mike's war-like ideas and were militantly gathering about the "buttinsky" and glaring at him in by no means reassuring fashion, Parkyn discreetly followed "Professor" Mike's directions, backing out of the place with what dignity he could muster under the rather disturbing conditions.

When Parkyn reported to Halloran at the hotel the failure of his mission and the character of his reception, that matter-of-fact person laughed uproariously, saying, after the manner of all wise prophets, "I told ye so."

Thinking that the young man might take offense at his levity, Halloran said, apologetically:

"Don't get sore at me, Mr. Parkyn. I was laughin' like the dog that ate the paprika, on the other side of me face." His eyes snapped threateningly as he continued, "I'd give a week's pay—if I ever get any again—t' walk up ter Hanton's place with half a dozen huskies that would stand without hitchin', an' tear the livin' guts out o' that infernal dump. But there's times when a feller's got to stand the gaff without kickin' back, an' this is one of 'em. If anything's started we musn't do it, an' besides, "he chuckled, "we ain't got the huskies."

"You are absolutely right, Halloran," replied Parkyn, gravely, "the medicine that both the mayor and Hanton handed me wasn't pleasant to take, but I guess it was coming to me. Besides, it was a lesson in self-control that was worth all it cost."

"Nothin' to it, sir. I've had to eat me share o' crow in me day. I never did get used to it, an' I've

always laid for the chance to make the feller that handed me the bird eat a turkey buzzard before I got through with him. But practice makes perfect, an' now I can swallow an old gray parrot, if I have to, ter say nothin' of a nice black crow, an' make believe it's quail. Yes, that self-control business is great stuff—when there's more o' them than there is o' you."

"You're a philosopher, Halloran," laughed Parkyn; "you're teaching me something every minute."

"Thank you, sir. That's some compliment. Come up to my room and let's have a smoke."

"At your service, Halloran," said the superintendent, cheerily; "let us both be philosophers and enjoy the philosopher's consolation—tobacco."

The two men repaired to Halloran's quarters and over their pipes forgot for the time being their cares and responsibilities.

"Whenever I try to smoke out my troubles," said Parkyn, "I am reminded of a bit of verse written by one of my old professors:

> " 'Under tobacco's wonderful spell
> Trouble flies and the world goes well—
> Visions of hope flit through the brain
> And all is joy and peace again.
> Under tobacco's wonderful spell
> Happiness comes and all goes well—
> This old world's filled with angels fair,
> Back to hell flies the demon, Care!"

"Pretty wise old chap, wasn't he, Halloran?"

"That old feller sure knew a lot, Mr. Parkyn," agreed the foreman, meditatively, wreathing himself in a huge cloud of smoke, "but I'm afraid that before we get through it'll take a few pipes o' hop,

or a big dose of chloroform to make us forget our troubles. The angels fair that he talks about, are goin' to be up against the real thing, sure as my name's Jack Halloran."

"And there's one chap to whom you'd like to give about a quart of chloroform as a preventive of trouble, eh?" laughed the young man.

"If you mean that feller O'Connor," retorted Halloran, savagely, "you've hit the spike plumb on the head, an' driven her clean through the tie. Quart, eh?" he blustered, "I'd like to give that son-of-a-gun a barrel of the knock-out dope,"—and the sturdy foreman, gripping his powerful fingers in a grimly suggestive and business-like way, glared fiercely out of the window at the shack that sheltered the men.

"Why, you primitive savage!" exclaimed Parkyn in mock horror; "you wouldn't kill him, would you?"

"You heard what I said," retorted the foreman, resolutely setting his jaw, "I reckon you know as much as I do about the safe dose of the sweet-smeller. P'raps a quart is some strong, but I'm willin' to compromise with ye. Let's make it a pint."

"Halloran," smiled Parkyn, "I'm afraid you're a bad Indian."

"I don't quite get you," replied Halloran, quietly, "but if you mean that I've got it in for O'Connor, you've said somethin', believe me."

Chapter VIII

TROUBLE MAKER AND PEACE MAKER

Butch Harris had concocted no very definite plan as to how he would accomplish his purpose of "getting" Bob Parkyn. He felt, however, that he could trust to luck and his own ingenuity for both means and opportunity. Under cover of the excitement and noise of a riot among the men, plenty of chances were likely to present themselves. Then, too, he reflected, the fates might be kind enough to take the really serious part of the job off his hands.

Should a violent demonstration occur among the workmen, it required little perspicacity to see that under such conditions many things might happen to a man of Parkyn's official position, physical stamina and undoubted moral and physical courage.

If some "crazy Dago" happened to pull a gun or knife on the young man, and should chance to "cook" him, Butch's problem would be solved without risk to himself, and Hennessy would be even better pleased than if the original and more hazardous plan had been carried out.

During the days immediately following the strike, Harris, alias O'Connor, as Parkyn had surmised, had done his best to excite unrest and dissatisfaction among the men. This was no easy matter at first, for the men in general had no special grievances against those who had been directing their labors

and who really had been rather popular with them.

By subtle innuendo and suggestion, however, in which he was aided by the outspoken denunciation and threats of a few malcontents who had been justly disciplined by either Parkyn or Halloran, the thug succeeded in stirring up some little feeling and resentment of imaginary wrongs, especially toward Parkyn, whom Butch at first vaguely, and finally with definiteness, asserted to be an aristocrat of the most offensive type.

Halloran was depicted to the malcontents as merely a creature of the young engineer's who would be very decent if he were not under the latter gentleman's malign and corrupting influence.

Further—and this point was driven well home by Butch—the men were assured that, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, the entire strike with all its attendant evils had been fostered by just such men as Parkyn, for the malevolent purpose of self-aggrandizement by giving themselves the opportunity to curry favor with the capitalists—the natural foes of every honest workman. He also hinted to the men that, as the young engineer was an ambitious company official, they could guess the rest.

By keeping under the influence of liquor, those who seemed to be apt scholars in the lessons of rebellion which he was inculcating, the crook finally instilled considerable gall and wormwood into the minds of a small proportion of the men—a proportion which, however, was large enough for his sinister purpose, if trouble once began. These men became restless, dissatisfied and ripe for revolt. The more truculent of them not only became turbulent, but quarreled among themselves for want of other outlet for their animosities.

As the men's money began to give out and the unions manifested no great eagerness to supply the funds necessary for their relief, Butch's task grew easier. He spent money lavishly for liquor and day by day wormed himself deeper into the confidence of the strikers.

The time soon arrived when Butch felt that his plans must be immediately consummated. There were several men who, under proper conditions, he believed could be relied upon to attend to his little business with Parkyn. It was not so easy, however, to make a deal with one of them which was not fraught with danger to himself.

The thug was in rather deep water, but doing his unsuccessful best to see his way clear, when chance fairly threw the intended victim into his hands. The old saying, "a fool for luck" should be amended to read "a fool or a rascal for luck," so as to cover from either angle the case of such men as Butch.

On the evening of the day Bob Parkyn visited the mayor and Hanton, the keeper of the groggery, about twenty of the workmen were gathered in one of the hurriedly-built shacks used by the construction gang as bunk-houses. Several of these men were of the contingent that had fallen under Butch Harris' evil influence.

In the corner of the bunk-house, at a rough table made of packing boxes, sat four Italians, playing cards and getting such excitement as they could out of the small amount of money they had left. So small was this pittance that the stakes in front of them were pathetic in their meagerness. The pitiful story the money told was plain enough even to the unimaginative mind.

Like a thunderbolt out of a smiling summer sky, came trouble—trouble serious enough to satisfy the most ardent lover of the battle game—delivering his victim into Butch's hands in a manner most favorable to the execution of his designs and the concealment of any fine work which he might perform in furtherance of those designs, and so suddenly that the thug was taken almost unprepared.

Whether crooked work by the gamblers actually was going on never will be known. One of the players, however, accused another of cheating. There was no argument, the insult was too deadly and had to be wiped out instanter. Such was the primitive code of those humble Italian laborers, who held life cheap and honor high—a reversionary type of temperament which made them worthy of more ancient days in their own land of sunshine, flowers and dark, desperate deeds.

The man accused of cheating pulled a knife, and missing his insulter's chest, drove the blade deep into his shoulder, inflicting a severe wound. The wounded man fell to the floor, his assailant falling squarely on top of him. The man beneath was a powerful fellow and succeeded in getting his arms around his adversary, he hugged him so tightly that the man above could not release his arm to withdraw the stiletto and repeat the blow. Thus locked in a deadly embrace the men lay panting on the floor like two fierce animals of the jungle in the death grapple.

The other two card players, apparently dazed by the suddenness of the quarrel, stood for a moment, stupidly gazing at each other across the overturned pile of boxes into which the gaming-table had sad-

denly disintegrated. Recovering themselves with equal suddenness, they furiously sprang at each other's throats. So much in haste were they to annihilate each other, that neither had the forethought to draw a weapon, although both were armed.

The new combatants also went to the floor together like a pair of ferocious wild cats, turned over and over in the struggle for supremacy and finally rolled out of the door of the bunk-house into the road, where they continued to maul and tear each other to their heart's content.

The plunging of the second pair of battlers into the fray was as if a signal had been pre-arranged. The Italians are much like the Scotch in their clannishness, and just as a McDougall stands by a McDougall, so does the Italian stand by a compatriot from his own district. Should the compatriot be a blood relation, even in the 'steenth degree, no Kentucky feudist ever excelled the Italian's eagerness to enter a fight to vindicate a thin-skinned honor backed by the blood that is thicker than water and hotter than the fire-boxes of hell.

In less time than has been consumed in describing the affair, the entire room-full of dark-skinned, feverish-blooded, high-strung sons of fair Italia, were engaged in a battle which for years was still spoken of with bated breath by the good citizens of the town of A . . ., who were wont to inhibit the evil propensities and turbulent spirits of their children by the always effective formula, "The Guineas'll catch you, if you don't watch out."

Instinctively dividing into factions and each as instinctively choosing his opponent, the infuriated men rushed at each other like so many madmen.

Clubs appeared from nowhere, stilettos and guns from everywhere, and in less than thirty seconds each warrior was doing his prettiest to exterminate his man.

At least a dozen shots were fired, and a half dozen men wounded more or less severely in the first rush. After the two factions became indiscriminately intermingled, shots were fired in the thick of the fight, all of which went wild. There was, however, some fairly effective work done with the knife—which has at least this much to its credit; it does not often go wild, and when it does it usually hits the right target, albeit in the wrong place.

Back and forth, up and down the room the fighters struggled, a heaving, writhing mass of primitive beasts, with the blood lust in their hearts and their brains obsessed with one fierce desire—to kill!—anyway, everyway, so it be to kill!

Now and again a man was crushed against the tier of bunks or the wall until the very life was all but squeezed out of him and he dropped helpless to the floor from sheer suffocation, only to rise and go at it again more fiercely than ever, as soon as he regained his wind.

One man, with a stab in his throat which had narrowly missed his jugular, staggered toward the door and fell limply just outside. The first shock of the blow recovered from, he re-entered the shack and again plunged into the thick of the fray, battling like a demon, his blood spouting impartially on friend and foe.

Another brawler, temporarily stunned and almost blinded by a shot fired athwart his eyes at close range, staggered to the open window, falling across

the sill, where he lay helpless for a minute or two, then, recovering himself, he too, returned to the fight.

The atmosphere of the room was redolent with the odor of the perspiring bodies and lung exhalations of the none too clean battlers, mingled with the peculiar sickly odor of blood, the pungent smell of garlic and the unmistakable acrid tang of powder smoke.

The superintendent and foreman had finished their pipes and sat chatting. The latter, however, soon complained of feeling sleepy and asked to be excused.

The two men bade each other good night and Parkyn repaired to the hotel veranda, where he sat for a while revolving in his mind the seemingly crucial situation that confronted Halloran and himself. Growing restless and not being at all inclined bedward, he finally sauntered slowly down to the steamboat wharf, where he stood pensively gazing at the star-sprinkled night sky and the gorgeous summer moon, that just then was proudly rising across the heavens in all her cold, silver brilliancy. From time to time his revery was disturbed by boisterous shouts and rude laughter, proceeding from one of the bunk-houses.

Suddenly there was the sound of angry voices, immediately followed by the noise of a scuffle. Parkyn listened intently.

"That sounds as if O'Connor were getting busy," he soliloquized.

A fusillade of shots rang out, mixed with yells of pain and fury.

"Good God! It's come!"

Parkyn tore up the pier and down the road toward the bunk-house, yelling madly:

"Jack! Oh Jack! They're at it! Get down here, quick, for God's sake!"

Some good citizens must have heard the row and given the alarm, for before Bob reached the shack where the battle was in progress, the bell in the town hall was ringing like mad, night-capped heads were popping out of windows in every direction, and suddenly-awakened women and children were shrieking the town into pandemonium.

Somebody yelled, "Fire!" and the town's volunteer fire-fighters soon could be seen rushing madly about like a lot of decapitated chickens, rubbing the sleep and nocturnal gum from their eyes and excitedly trying to find each other, make ready the old hand-pump engine, and locate the fire.

As Parkyn rushed into the bunk-house he stumbled over the two warriors who were just rolling out of the door. Narrowly missing stepping on them, he sprang over their writhing, panting bodies and straight on into the shack.

Merely because of its dramatic effects alone, the scene into the midst of which the young engineer was thus suddenly projected, was one that no man, and least of all, Bob Parkyn, would have been likely ever to forget. It was destined to be indelibly stamped upon the screen of his memory in letters of fire and blood, to be vividly brought back a thousand times by agony of soul, despair and humiliation of spirit such as rarely falls to the lot of man.

A struggling, cursing, shouting, shooting, stabbing mass of savage humanity in the center of the room was trampling on the prostrate bodies of those who

either were already *hors de combat,* or still were murderously adjusting their mutual differences on the floor. Shot after shot was fired from the midst of the heaving mass, the missiles flying in all directions and making a zone of fire which, under the circumstances, was more dangerous than the center of warfare.

With instantaneous grasp of the state of affairs, Parkyn rushed headlong into the thick of the fray in a frantic endeavor to separate and mollify the men.

"Fool?" Of course he was a fool, but the line between bravery and foolhardiness is so shadowy, so intangible, that most high-spirited, strong-hearted men overstep it some time or other.

Cowards rarely are foolhardy. Deeds of heroism are not painted in yellow. Brave men sometimes display cowardice—there's a tinge of ochre even in heroic blood—but your man with the deeply ingrained yellow streak rarely is just the sort of a fool that Parkyn was on that memorable night on the Hudson.

Many acts of heroism, like many crimes, are performed on the impulse of the moment, and possibly the young engineer, like many another hero on impulse, the next instant regretted his rashness. If so, the greater was his heroism, for he stood by his guns.

Butch Harris long before had learned the lesson that everybody had worries of his own, and that nobody but "chumps" ever poked their "bills" into other people's troubles. Besides, this was his "racket"—he had laid the wires and framed up the setting for it. His cue, therefore, was to make his "get away" and stay away until the battle was over,

waiting meanwhile, to see what the fates would do for him in the matter of dropping Parkyn into his hand.

The Strangler saw the fight fairly well under way —he could not well help it, for the scrap came on so suddenly and fiercely that it made even the experienced and hardened ruffian gasp—and then sneaked out of the door to safety. He stationed himself behind a near-by shack, and kept a sharp lookout in the direction of the hotel.

Butch's shrewd surmise as to Parkyn's probable action in case of a serious disturbance among the workmen soon was justified by his appearance on the scene. He came sprinting along like a deer, but in a different direction from that expected by Harris.

As the young engineer passed his hiding place, the thug, with a sudden inspiration that infused a semblance of courage into his own yellow heart, sprang after him, and when Parkyn entered the bunk-house Butch was right at his heels. Instinctively realizing the golden opportunity to safely get his man, he followed the superintendent into the thick of the fray.

"Begorra! I'm wid yez, Misther Parkyn!" he shouted in his fake Irish brogue. "Quit yer fightin', ye damned wops!"

When a man rushes into a crazy, fighting mob, armed with pistols and knives, it is second nature to draw his own weapon—if he has one upon him. As Parkyn rushed into the crowd of maddened battlers he instinctively drew his pistol; Butch followed suit, but with a definite and sinister motive.

Although he did not draw his weapon with the purpose of using it, the superintendent intuitively felt that a gun in hand was worth a dozen argu-

ments in the proverbial bush. This idea in general is not a bad one, but where everybody in a crowd is armed with a gun or knife and shooting or stabbing in all directions, a gun more or less doesn't count for much—either for its moral effect or as a physical argument.

Parkyn flourished his gun threateningly, and endeavored to separate the men by shouldering and pulling them apart with his free hand, Butch pretending to aid the young man, meanwhile looking for a chance to get him.

The two men were immediately caught in the midst of the press and the superintendent's gun-hand was forced above his head. In the struggle to free it, the weapon accidentally was discharged, the ball whistling over the bobbing heads of the struggling, swaying mass of infuriated fighters and passing out of the door, to spend itself harmlessly in the hillside on the other side of the road.

Just as Parkyn's gun-hand was carried above the head-level of the mob, Butch pressed his own gun to the young man's side and pulled the trigger!

No member of a fighting mob stays "put" long enough to count as a steady target—which is why in such strenuous affairs the mortality rate is so low. Parkyn himself did not stay put, and just as the Strangler placed his gun against the superintendent's side, the intended victim was rolled away in the press of straining bodies.

The weapon was a good one—tried and true—it was well aimed and went of on schedule time, but the target swerved aside and the thug made a clean miss of his man.

But "every bullet has its billet," and that from Butch's gun was no exception to the rule. Missing

Parkyn, it passed behind his back and tore a hole through the chest of the man nearest him. The unfortunate fellow died without a groan, his heart torn clear through.

The body of the dead man, supported by the living bodies that suddenly closed in about him, stood uncannily erect for a brief space, then, as the crowd surged apart, it slipped and slid to the floor as a bundle of rags might have fallen. It was rolled over on its face by the cruel, tramping, kicking feet of his late friends and foes and lay in a ghastly, motionless heap around which a pool of blood slowly formed.

Butch hastily cocked his gun and with the muzzle full against Parkyn's body again pulled the trigger. But the young man's good fairy must have been on guard that night—although he later cursed the luck that let him live through the fight—for the hammer clicked harmlessly on a defective cartridge. There was no opportunity for the thug to make another attempt to fire, for the rush of maddened men carried him away from his quarry.

Luckily for Parkyn, he received a stab in the thigh, which bled so freely that he soon fell from sheer weakness. Once the superintendent had gone to the floor, the infuriated men turned on Butch and made common cause against him. He, too, went to the floor under a rain of blows. His histrionic ability would have cost him his life, had not Jack Halloran, reinforced by several constables and a number of the towns-people, rushed in, club and gun in hand, and overcome those of the men who still were on their feet.

Heads were cracked and jaws were punched, right and left, and the Italians, all of whom were well nigh

exhausted from their enthusiastic efforts to slaughter each other and sundry weakening hurts on their anatomies, were soon subjugated and taken to the town calaboose.

No sooner had Butch Harris struggled to his feet, than he dramatically pointed, first at the dead man and then at Parkyn, and cried:

"There's de guy what killed that Dago!"

"You're crazy, you d——d tough! Say that again an' I'll wring your neck!" raved the enraged Halloran.

Threat and action came together with Jack Halloran and had he not been pulled off by half a dozen men, the thug probably would not have lived to bear further testimony against Bob Parkyn.

The mayor, Hanton and Big Mike were among a miscellaneous crowd that arrived on the scene just in time to hear Butch accuse Parkyn of the murder. The accusation was "nuts" for them, and the mayor at once ordered the young engineer under arrest.

If John Halloran had not interposed, his friend would have been thrown, bleeding and helpless as he was and unable to speak, into the common calaboose with the other prisoners, who undoubtedly would have finished him long before morning.

The experienced Halloran applied a handkerchief tourniquet to his friend's thigh above the wound and twisted it tightly, thus stopping the hemorrhage. He then had him carried to the hotel and sent for a physician, who promptly came and skilfully dressed the wound, after which the doctor went to the jail and attended to the less dangerous injuries of the men.

A strong guard was placed over Parkyn for the night. The mayor, now thoroughly alarmed, tele-

graphed to the sheriff at the county seat for help. The latter official at once telegraphed the governor, and early the following morning a posse of deputy sheriffs and a company of militia were in control of the situation.

The coroner was notified and late the next afternoon held an inquest, at which the most interested listener was Boss Hennessy, who, apprised of the situation by the New York papers, had come up on the early morning boat, arriving in time to air his indignation at the murder of one of his men, and to hold a private conference with the coroner, the coroner's physician and the town officials, in which he left certain very definite impressions upon their minds as to the frightful nature of the crime committed and the imperative necessity of protecting the public—and more especially the "honest laboring man"—by doing their full duty in the premises.

Immediately on his arrival at the scene, Hennessy learned all the details of the murder, including the charge made against Parkyn. He knew that his henchman could be relied upon to "stick," hence he very wisely kept away from that worthy member of the Universal Society of Thugs, Limited, whilst Butch, being mindful of the stipulation made by the Boss at Black Bill's on the night of the frame-up, studiously avoided his employer.

The evidence submitted at the coroner's inquest was all one way, hence the result was a foregone conclusion.

The jury was composed of honest, simple, town and country folk, who in forming conclusions usually go straight to the point when the way is made

plain to them—and on this occasion it was made plain enough for the most obtuse mind.

The Italians who were in the lamentable fracas, really did not know who fired the shot that killed their fellow countryman. None of those who had fired pistols could feel quite sure that he himself was not guilty of the murder. All were glad to avail themselves of the opportunity to evade responsibility by saddling the crime onto some one else.

Their erstwhile "Irish" friend, "O'Connor," had given them their cue. The fight being over, they were glad to again claim his friendship, hence his veracity was not to be questioned, and his direct accusation of Parkyn had been staunchly supported by adroit questioning and subtle suggestion by Hennessy through an interpreter, in the jail prior to the inquest. The Italians—five of whom testified—being well-drilled, made excellent witnesses. The testimony of one was the testimony of all. Each swore that he had seen Parkyn fire the fatal shot.

The star witness naturally was "O'Connor." His testimony was especially strong because of the seeming hesitancy with which it was given, and the apparent fact that in the mêlée he had endeavored to assist Parkyn in his efforts to restore order, as the accused man freely admitted.

In the minds of the jury there could be no doubt as to who fired the shot by which the deceased came to his death. O'Connor testified that he stood immediately at the side of the accused and saw him place his gun almost against the victim's breast and fire. The witness also saw the deceased fall, shortly after which he himself had publicly charged Parkyn with the killing.

The testimony of Dr. Danford, the county physician, was merely perfunctory. He examined the body of Giulio Maggioli, the deceased, and found that he had come to his death from a gunshot wound, fired, as proved by the character of the wound and the powder marks, at close range. The ball had passed obliquely through the chest, piercing the heart, and lodged in the muscles of the back.

Yes, he had removed the ball and had it in his office. He hadn't brought it to the inquest because he "didn't think it necessary." He could, however, send for it, if the coroner so desired.

The coroner did not consider that the ball was essential as an evidence exhibit—the testimony of the other witnesses and the doctor's statement of the cause of death was complete without it, he said, hence the doctor need not send for it.

It should be noted that Halloran's gun, with which Parkyn was said to have done the killing, was submitted as an important exhibit.

It may astonish the uninitiated that the bullet was not called for. It will not, however, astonish those who are wise in the ways of politics and its dispensation of public offices to incompetents. The selection of incumbents of political offices often seems to involve a careful search for those persons who are least intelligent and most inefficient and subservient.

The coroner of H . . . County was a typical combination of political bum and country "rube" who, if he ever looked past his own nose was likely to get his retinas scorched and who, whilst lighting his cigar hazarded a conflagration by the ignition of his own breath.

The coroner's physician having been selected for the office by the coroner himself, was a fit running-mate for that bibulous person. Danford was a type that is only too often met with in the profession—or rather, hanging onto the skirts of the profession. Every city ward has one or more of him drawing nurture from municipal politics. Every country town has at least one of him.

Wherever he is found, the hall-marks are plain. He is called "Doc," and is proud of it; he is a liberal user of that lurid cosmetic known as "nose paint," and has the reputation of being the "best doctor in town—when he's sober." The fact that he never *is* sober serves as a sort of accident insurance for the guileless layman.

What could have been expected of the befuddled wits of the coroner and his subordinate?

As for Parkyn, he was still so weak from shock and loss of blood, and his mind so murky and withal so overwhelmed by the overpowering weight of the testimony against him, that he could think of nothing save the fearful injustice of it all.

John Halloran, while intelligent enough and fairly shrewd, was neither deep nor cunning, and besides, he was so furious at the predicament in which the young engineer had been placed, that he could not think coolly nor coherently. He gave his testimony in a disconnected and wrathful fashion which might have suggested to the impartial mind an ardent desire to whip the coroner and all of his minions. He never for a moment thought of calling for the fatal bullet and comparing its caliber to that of the gun he had loaned the superintendent.

There were two men in the room who were decid-

edly on the *qui vive* while Dr. Danford was testifying, and to whose minds the coroner's decision as to the bullet was very reassuring.

Hennessy saw the point at once—he was an old and experienced fox in such matters and could give the average criminal lawyer "cards and spades." He watched Butch's face very closely while the doctor was testifying and fancied he saw anxiety depicted thereon. He was almost certain of this when the question of sending for the bullet arose. He thought also, that Butch's face showed an expression of relief when the coroner decided that the bullet was not necessary in evidence.

The Boss tried to catch his henchman's eye, but without success. Butch apparently was counting the hairs of a near-bald individual who sat just in front of him, and affecting an indifference to the doctor's testimony which, as the boss shrewdly surmised, he did not feel.

Hennessy made, for future reference, a mental note of the medical testimony. The cunning instinct of the crook told him where the "hole in the fence" was situated, and he resolved that it must be mended. His first casual survey of the doctor's physiognomy satisfied the Boss that he would have little difficulty in that direction. As for the men "higher up," they, he reflected, were "dead easy—a lead-pipe cinch."

There is one way to handle a fool who is easily bent crooked, and another way to handle men who already are bent, and who can't be fooled and rarely fool themselves. Both, however, can be handled by anybody who knows the price of men in the political market, and the Boss knew the price better than did most men. His experienced judgment as an

appraiser of that sort of goods never had been challenged.

The feebly-given testimony of the accused in his own behalf had no weight with the coroner's jury. They regarded it as the usual denial of guilt on the part of a criminal.

The verdict of the jury was clear and succinct:

"We, the jury, find that the deceased, Giulio Maggioli, came to his death by a gunshot wound, inflicted with intent to kill, by the prisoner, Robert Parkyn, and recommend that he be held without bail to the grand jury of H . . . County to await its action."

The prisoner was turned over to the sheriff, and immediately taken by him to the jail in the town of B . . ., the county seat.

When he gave the lie to "O'Connor," loyal Jack Halloran had no means of knowing that the young engineer really had not killed the Italian. Not realizing at first the seriousness of the young man's predicament, he felt that, if Parkyn really had done the killing, it was all in the line of his duty, and that one Guinea more or less should not weigh very heavily in the balance with the life and liberty of an American citizen, and especially of a friend.

The inquest had not proceeded far, however, before the big foreman plainly saw that, so far as the coroner's jury was concerned, young Parkyn's case was hopeless. When the verdict was in and Bob had been transferred to the county jail, Jack swore a string of ripping oaths that would have made a fishwife blush. He vowed vengeance on O'Connor in every language known to masters of profanity, at the same time vaguely comprehending his utter help-

lessness and inability to aid his friend and co-worker.

Aroused at last to comprehension of his friend's danger and greatly disturbed by the verdict, Jack hastened to visit the prisoner in the lockup, for the double purpose of rendering him any assistance he might need, and getting his story first hand.

Parkyn had so far recovered that he could talk to Halloran, albeit with difficulty and against the doctor's orders.

"Did you shoot that fellow, Mr. Parkyn?" anxiously inquired the foreman.

"No," replied the prisoner feebly, "I fired only one shot and that accidentally. The ball went over the heads of the crowd and then the Lord knows where. I couldn't have shot him if I had tried. I was wedged in the crowd so tightly that I couldn't move, and my pistol hand was stuck up in the air, with somebody holding my arm. In struggling to free myself I pulled the trigger of that self-cocker—and there you are.

"Have you got any idea who did do the killing?"

"Not the least in the world, Halloran. In that mixup it would have been safe to lay it onto anybody."

"Even onto you," said the foreman bitterly. "Well, we'll get you out o' this all right," he continued, not quite confidently.

"Let us hope so, Halloran," and Parkyn smiled faintly.

The seriousness of his friend's position was pretty clear to Halloran when he said good night to him in the jail, and he was more alarmed than he cared to admit.

Hennessy received the verdict with all the *sang froid* exhibited by his class when they have put something "over." The physiognomy of the cat that ate the canary was peevish and fretful compared with Hennessy's self-satisfied smirk. The expression of his countenance, in brief, was suggestive of "gloat."

Butch's mission had been successful beyond his chief's wildest anticipation. The Boss wondered at Harris' change of programme, and hungered for details of the—for him—lucky affair that had put his enemy into his hands via a situation which, even without any "nursing," was about as bad for the engineer as anything that even Hennessy himself could have devised. If there was no slip-up, he thought, Parkyn's predicament "beat gettin' him cooked, to a fare ye well."

It was not to be expected that the Boss would forego the pleasure of calling on his down-fallen, helpless foe. The sight of young Parkyn, lying on a stretcher at the inquest, had been pleasant indeed, but he knew one that would be far sweeter to his mental palate. He fain would enjoy the sight of the young engineer alone and suffering in gaol.

And so, before returning to New York, the vengeful Boss Hennessy paid a visit to Parkyn in the county jail at B . . . In the name of pity and in behalf of the milk of human kindness, let us rejoice that he was disappointed in his efforts to harass his victim.

The series of shocks which the prisoner had experienced, the loss of blood, the pain of his wound—which had become excruciating—a hypodermic of morphine given him by the doctor and several de-

grees of septic temperature that already had developed, had put his mind in such a dazed condition that it was almost beyond comprehension of his enemy's presence, to say nothing of the attempts of the Boss to worry him by vicious, merciless, verbal assaults.

To the mind of the unfortunate young man, the events of the past few days were an unpleasant, incoherent dream. He saw "as through a glass, darkly," and his sensibilities were obscured by a cloud of indifference and benumbed receptivity of all impressions, that the venomous tongue of his enemy could not penetrate.

Hennessy helped himself to a stool which, with the rude pallet that constituted Parkyn's bed, was the only furniture in the cell. He lost no time in preliminaries, but at once began launching his bolts.

"So," he sneered, "mamma's little Willie boy is pretty handy with a gun, ain't he? You'll be taught better than to cook a poor, hard workin' lad before we get done with ye. D'ye get me?"

The prisoner did not "get" him, but stared at him with dim and vacuous eyes.

"Huh! Not very sociable, are ye?" pursued the Boss. "Mamma didn't bring ye up right, did she? What'll she say when she hears what's happened to her baby boy, eh?"

Parkyn's brows contracted and his eyes became more alert for a fleeting moment; he then resumed his vacuous stare.

Hennessy was not making progress and he began to see it, so he resolved to play what in his benighted ignorance he considered his trump card.

"Oh, come out of it!" cried the Boss, grasping

the prostrate man roughly by the shoulder, and giving him a violent shake. "What d'ye s'pose Maggie Halloran'll say, when she reads what's happened to her tootsey wootsey—an' what's goin' ter happen to 'im pretty soon?" The Boss made the "sign of the rope" with his free hand.

The young engineer gazed at his tormentor with a puzzled expression.

"Maggie—Maggie—Halloran?" he said slowly, with an evident struggle to arouse his dulled memory and find words to frame his question. "Who—who is Mag—Maggie Hal—Halloran?"

The Boss let go of the young man's shoulder and snorted disgustedly, "Bugs!"

As he went out of the door, boiling with rage and disappointment, Hennessy turned and called back over his shoulder:

"Reckon you'll come out o' this all right, Bo, if the Doc. is onto his job, an' if ye do, the lawyers'll have better luck makin' ye talk than I did. You'll not need any third degree beforehand, anyhow. Your case is a lead pipe cinch."

The following morning Hennessy returned to A . . ., and in a state of mind far different than on the evening on which our story opens, took the boat to New York.

The attraction which women had for the Boss was not tinged by any idealism or sentiment, but was of a purely physical character. The desire to possess was stronger while it lasted than the more tender, enduring quality of desire of which poets and romancers are wont to rave, and his resentment of any interference with his sex cravings was

as fierce as it was primitive. He not only no longer cared for Maggie Halloran, but regarded her as an unappreciative fool, and hated her most cordially. His heart was invulnerable to hurt, but his pride and prestige were not, and his one thought now was revenge, but revenge upon the man whom he erroneously considered his successful rival was not all he sought; he included Maggie Halloran in his wrath. She had turned him down—that was enough.

Hennessy was a savage and relentless hater. He never forgave an injury, and when he went after his man stopped not until he got him. In injuring Parkyn he felt that he not only would revenge himself upon a favored rival, but also would take the shortest cut to evening up matters with the woman who had scorned his high and mighty self.

Like all of his vengeful, lawless kind, the Boss dearly loved to partake of funeral baked meats at the expense of a foe. The sight of sorrowful smilax and immortelles also was a joy to his heart, and the smell of tuberoses and such trimmings on an enemy's coffin was as incense to his nostrils. This, however, was better. Dead men tell no tales, but here was a live one who, for Hennessy's purposes, at present was worth a dozen dead ones.

"The big stiff may get croaked on a string, but it'll be by a guy that's licensed reg'lar to do the cookin'," he chuckled to himself.

Things certainly were coming his way, and as the Boss sat at a table in the bar-room of the boat with his feet cocked up on a chair, a bottle of whisky, a siphon of seltzer and a tall glass in his hand, smoking a fat, black, maduro perfecto, "three for a half." he softly hummed a tune that just then was very popular in gang-land:

"Dere was a man in New York town, an' he was mighty wise,
'Till he took a stroll in de Bow-er-ee an' met two strong arm guys.
Dey stuck 'im up an' rolled 'im; to tell dis gives me pain.
Dey broke his bean an croaked 'im, an'—he—never—peeped—again."

Unquestionably, Mr. Thomas-Boss-Bull-Hennessy was happy. Standards vary, of course.

"There's just nothin' to it!" he murmured, contentedly, as he lighted a fresh cigar and helped himself to another stiff drink.

Chapter IX

A GUEST OF THE COUNTY

For the first few days after his removal to the county jail at B . . ., Parkyn remained practically indifferent to his surroundings. The wound in his thigh no longer was painful, but the slight infection that attended it was aggravated by the mechanical disturbance incidental to the trip from A . . . and did not yield promptly to treatment, although Halloran had employed a competent surgeon to continue the management of the case. The brain depression consequent upon septic absorption, combined with the shock of the injury—from the effects of which he had not quite recovered—and the continued exhaustion incidental to the loss of blood he had experienced, to a certain extent still benumbed the young man's mental faculties.

It was not long, however, before Parkyn's magnificent constitution asserted itself, his temperature subsided, the wound rapidly healed and he began to take a lively interest in his decidedly unpleasant situation. Bail having been refused—which refusal was superfluous, as the young man was without financial resources—the prisoner found himself compelled to face a period of jail life that was as disagreeable as it was indefinite.

There undoubtedly have been worse dungeons in the world than the jail at B . . ., but it must be

confessed that for discomfort the institution was a match for almost anything in the jail line then extant. It probably would have made some medieval prisons look to their laurels.

The County Court House, in the rear of which, in a sort of annex, was the jail, was a remarkable building of brick, built when B . . . was young, that had not kept pace with the rest of the town. It is true that as B . . . grew in size and importance the authorities had endeavored to adapt the courthouse to the increasing necessities of their constituency, but they built neither wisely nor well. Instead of tearing down the old building and replacing it with a new and more modern structure, they had built addition after addition onto the original building until it was an uncouth architectural monstrosity and as unsanitary and inconvenient as the ingenuity of ignorance could make it. The jail originally was an afterthought and evidently was built in the rear of the main building chiefly because the space was useless for any other purpose.

On one side of the courthouse was a fire-engine house, and on the other a livery stable. On the side of the alley opposite the jail were numerous private stables. The offal from these various sources, combined with the garbage that was indiscriminately thrown into the alley, furnished an effluvium which was well nigh insupportable. As the light and ventilation of the jail were provided by a single iron-barred, unscreened window overlooking the alley, the consequent imitation of the Black Hole of Calcutta was closer than was comfortable for any luckless individual who chanced to be entertained at the expense of the county. To insure against any possibility of the inmates of the jail getting a sufficient

amount of light and God's oxygen, the cells were located on the side farthest away from the window. This arrangement undoubtedly was considered an evidence of the builder's profound knowledge of prison architecture, for it certainly conformed to the prevalent ideas of correct form in prison building—prevalent not only then, but even now.

Huge, buzzing, droning swarms of flies, in which the genuses blue-bottle and horse-fly were much in evidence, added their quota of nastiness to the festering mass of filth in which the alley abounded.

Much has been said and written regarding the evil propensities of the domestic fly, but no one ever has accused him of unsociability or stinginess. He is especially sociable at meal times, and more than liberal in sharing with his hosts anything that he may have picked up in the stable-yard or garbage can. As he neglects to wash his feet, when he dines with his human hosts he always gives liberally of his store of filth in exchange for such particles of food or portions of drink as he may appropriate for his own nourishment. He is especially prodigal in the distribution of the microbes of disease—his favorite contribution being the bacillus of typhoid. The flies of B . . . were wont to congregate in great swarms in and about the jail, and were even more sociable and offensive than the majority of their kind.

At the time of his incarceration Parkyn was the only steady boarder in the county's caravansary and had an almost constant monopoly of the flies. An occasional "drunk and disorderly" was thrown into the jail, but as such law-breakers were transients and usually were jailed at night, their cases being disposed of in the morning, they did very little to

assist the young man in entertaining his buzzy guests.

One useful function, however, was subserved by these drunks. They seemed to divert from Parkyn the attention of other and more carnivorous insect pests with which the jail was infested. Whether the alcoholized blood of the aforesaid transient guests was more agreeable than Parkyn's to the palates of the blood-thirsty insects, or so stupefied them that they lost interest in the search for fresh victims, is open to question, but certain it is that he was able to sleep in comparative comfort when he had a drunk or two for fellow-prisoners.

By energetic battling with the insect marauders of the night, succeeding generations of prisoners had added much to the weird general color design of the jail interior. Around the walls was a splotchy red dado, with radiating perpendicular streaks along the cracks of the matched boarding with which the room was walled and ceiled in lieu of plaster. Blending with the dingy, age-yellowed whitewash of the walls this coloring was most deappetizing. Parkyn's disgust when he discovered that the incongruous color effect was due to crushed vermin, may be imagined.

The rude bunk on which the prisoner was expected to woo the drowsy god, was in keeping with the other appointments of the jail. The linen was rusty with age and mildewed from dampness and lack of airing. The musty smell of the bed-clothes was commingled with the characteristic odor of the human body which told of the infrequency of laundering, and suggested that the authorities believed in making such luckless occupants of the gaol as were not used to regular bathing, feel perfectly at home.

The blankets which theoretically were supposed to protect the occupant from the cold in rigouous weather, presented an embarrasing problem for the prisoner who was compelled to rely upon them for warmth and comfort. Semi-occasional and imperfect washings had distinctly failed to improve their appearance, but had been very successful in shrinking their proportions.

The weather suddenly had turned cold and rainy, and Parkyn struggled with the blankets for several nights in the vain endeavor to compromise between cold feet and exposure of his chest to chill. The effort to cover the one, resulted disastrously to the other. He finally gave up in despair and slept in his socks, devoting the blanket chiefly to the protection of his lungs.

The blankets were rivaled by the mattress in their ambition to make the occupant of the bunk thoroughly uncomfortable. It was upholstered with excelsior, in which, apparently, there was a large admixture of ordinary pine shavings. This upholstering had segregated itself into veritable islands and continents of torture.

Parkyn consoled himself with the reflection that the lumps of excelsior which made his nights one long, dreary round of fragmentary sleep and wakeful discomfort, were not composed of splinters. He did at least escape with sundry areas of angrily reddened and tender skin. There were no real lacerations, and this gave the prisoner a hopeful view of conditions. It seemed reasonable to suppose that his skin finally would become so tough from constant mechanical abuse that nothing short of a bullet or a knife ever could penetrate it.

To make doubly certain the misery of the guests

of the county, the builder of the jail with diabolic ingenuity had constructed it only one story in height. As there was no air space above the ceiling, the effect of the sun's rays beating down upon the tarred and graveled roof in hot weather was all that the most ardent believer in the punishment of innocent as well as guilty accused persons could desire.

Discounting the flies, the diet end of the sojourn in the jail at B . . . was not open to serious criticism. Prisoners were not to be had in sufficient numbers to make official graft on their food worth while, hence Parkyn had little to complain of regarding either the quantity or quality of the food. With a few more prisoners to feed and a course of lessons in grafting from experienced officials in larger and more metropolitan communities, the sheriff of H . . County might not have been so liberal.

There came to the prisoner long, depressing stretches of loneliness when he cordially would have welcomed the occasional babbling drunks and could even tolerate the noisy curiosity-seekers in the alley. At such times the thought of his mother oppressed him dreadfully. Alone, ill, almost friendless, and with the prop of her old age suddenly knocked from under her, he knew what she must be enduring.

Halloran had seen Mrs. Parkyn several times since her son's arrest, and had reported her condition as favorably as he could—even stretching a point for the consolation of the prisoner—but had not deceived him in the least. Her infrequent letters to her boy told their own pathetic story. The handwriting showed the tremulous hand of advancing age and debility. He instinctively felt that he was destined never to see her again.

Then, too, he thought of the promise the outside world had offered him of a successful career in his profession. He never had lacked confidence in the genius of hard work and honest endeavor, nor had he ever lacked faith in his own ability, even in the dark days before the railroad position gave him his first chance for himself. He believed that the opportunity to work was the only thing that really was essential to success.

The sudden transition of his rosy horizon of hope into the leaden picture that now confronted him, and which in his mental vision he saw growing still darker in days to come, was an excruciating experience. The contrast between the optimism of youthful anticipation and the gloom of disappointment was sufficient to shock one more sanguine than even the young engineer.

Time after time he drew from his pocket his mother's photograph and with it the magazine picture of the unknown young woman, from which his imagination had constructed as close an approximation to the ideal as was possible for one whose mind was so tinged with practicality. As he gazed on the pictures he appreciated more than ever before the maternal love that he had enjoyed, and that other love which might have been.

So far as the picture of the young woman was concerned, his emotions naturally were not such as would have been aroused had he known and loved the original, but the picture typified the hope that every properly constituted man should have, of wife and family. It was an ideal for one who never before had definitely formed in his mind a sex ideal of any kind. The picture was emblematic also, of the position in life he had hoped some day to win.

Parkyn could not help felicitating himself and the fair unknown on their mutual good fortune in never having met and loved each other. There were just that many less heart-aches to endure, and one less victim to endure them. This was meager consolation, perhaps, but it helped.

The monotony of the young engineer's jail life rarely was broken by anything agreeable save the occasional visits of John Halloran, who came to see his friend as often as he could. Unpleasant breaks in the monotonny were, however, more frequent.

A real live murderer was not found in the county jail of B . . . so often as in the jails of more metropolitan communities, hence morbid curiosity on the part of the more unstable element of the town was not to be wondered at. Numbers of the curiosity-seekers braved the filth, noisome effluvia and swarming flies of the alley at the rear of the jail in the hope of catching a glimpse of the supposedly desperate criminal within. Some of these persons, more morbidly curious and venturesome than their companions, boldly climbed on boxes and barrels and endeavored to catch a glimpse of the desperado.

The ubiquitous, omnipresent small boy comprised a large part of the sensation seekers, and as the small boy of B . . . was a particularly noisy and irreverent variety of the pestiferous species, Parkyn's life in the county jail could not have been a dream of ecstatic bliss, even though other conditions had been favorable.

Worse even than the flies, the smells and the noisy little imps who congregated about the jail, were the curious members of the fair sex who, on one pretext or another, secured permission to visit the prisoner. These ladies, for the most part, approached the pris-

ioner's cage in an apprehensive state of mind bordering on hysteria. When, however, they found that Parkyn did not fly at them like the traditional wild man, they lost their nervousness and allowed their morbid, quasi-sentimental interest in the "criminal" to have full sway.

The romantic, extremely young and callow female person—who often builds heroes out of very bad clay—was, of course, numerously in evidence. These young persons, who had not yet passed the green-apple stage of sex development, were tolerated by the prisoner merely because of the innocent amusement they afforded.

There were other female visitors, however, who were more annoying, because wiser and more experienced along the lines of sex-approach. Some of these fair ones endeavored to solace the unfortunate young man by praying and singing hymns. Despite the obduracy of the prisoner—who knew little or nothing of sex-psychology, and therefore did not receive that sort of consolation at all hospitably or with sympathetic understanding—these ladies decided that he was "a perfect dear," and each and every one of them proceeded to more or less openly lavish upon him the blandishments peculiar to the sex. In fact, there was considerable rivalry as to who should have precedence in the matter of blandishments and frequency of visits.

Taken all in all, Parkyn's experience in the county jail of B . . . was such that he would have been reconciled to almost any reasonable punishment, however undeserved, that would have enabled him to escape his unpleasant situation. He thought of the innumerable instances in which poor devils had been permitted to lie in jail for many months before

trial, forgotten perhaps, like the prisoners in the Bastile. He recalled two cases, reported in the daily press, of poor, ignorant foreigners who had been committed to a metropolitan jail and allowed to remain there for a year, without trial, when they were discovered by sheer accident; he also recalled the case of a woman who was held merely as a witness, and allowed to lie in jail for many months. As he thought of these unfortunates, he grew almost desperate.

But the young man gave himself unnecessary anxiety. There was no danger of any prolongation of his detention in jail because of tardy legal action. Forces were at work of which he knew nothing, and moreover, in his particular case, his very poverty and friendlessness were aiding and abetting these forces in their endeavor to secure a speedy dispensation of "justice"—which, in his case, when freely translated, meant "railroading" him as rapidly as was humanly possible.

When young Parkyn learned that the grand jury had returned a true-bill against him, he was not surprised, for that this would occur had been a foregone conclusion. He was, however, astonished when he learned that his case had been set for trial in October.

The knowledge that his incarceration in the county jail would soon be over was such joyful news that, in large measure, it tempered the pessimism with which the prisoner regarded the outcome of his case. He thought, and not without reason, that there could not possibly be a change for the worse in his condition, and felt that even if his surroundings had been more pleasant, the reality of punishment

could not equal in horror the discomfort and suspense he then was enduring. He did not believe that, according to law and the evidence, he possibly could be in danger of the scaffold, even though judges and juries sometimes were dense in interpretation and savage in execution of the law. He had had no legal training, but like all intelligent men who follow the trend of current events, he knew something of the legal lines that were drawn between man-killings and of their classification. Notwithstanding the fact that his lawyer was a venal ass, as will be seen later, Parkyn had succeeded in getting from him a more or less clear confirmation of his own ideas of the situation.

Had the prisoner believed that he would be compelled permanently to remain in the jail at B . . . it is questionable whether even an immediate prospect of capital punishment itself would have had any terrors for him. The loss of liberty alone is a terrible affliction for a normal man, but when to imprisonment are added all the physical discomforts and inconveniences that ignorant humanity can devise, matters become so intolerable that it is not remarkable that some sensitive minds should find death by suicide, or even by the hangman's rope, pleasanter to contemplate. Were it not that long or frequent imprisonment blunts to a greater or less degree the sensibilities of the most refined, suicides would be much more frequent in prisons than they are. Possibly, however, the lack of opportunity has quite as much to do with the relative infrequency of self-destruction in penal institutions as has the inevitable deadening of the moral and physical sensibilities noted in criminals.

The law of our great and glorious country pre-

sumes every man innocent until he is proven guilty. Before trial it punishes the innocent and guilty alike —unless the accused has money—then the innocent and guilty alike are permitted to walk the pleasant paths of freedom.

If the punishment of the guilty were proportionate in severity to the unjust treatment accorded hundreds of friendless accused persons—many of them innocent—who are held without bail prior to trial in this so-called "Christian" land of ours, suicide would be the simplest solution of the problem facing the criminal.

Chapter X

CREATING AN ATMOSPHERE

As was to have been expected, the attitude of some of their women toward Parkyn did not fail to excite the satirical criticism of the male population of B . . ..

"The women folks go to the jail to pray and remain to mash," said one of the more irreverent of these critics.

Another, not so irreverently, perhaps, but more offensively, remarked that their conduct showed what some women would do to a fellow who was "locked up in a cage" and could neither "come back, defend himself, nor get away."

Beneath the satire and apparent jocularity of their attitude toward the foibles of their women folks was a glow of resentment on the part of the men of B . . ., in which the primordial jealousy of the male sex played a prominent part. This added fuel to the fire of social revengefulness that had burned in H . . . County, ever since the murder for which Parkyn was to be tried.

Some of the men were infuriated. Indeed, had it not been for a few of the wiser heads, several of those whose female relatives or friends had visited the prisoner would have started an agitation of which a lynching party would have been the logical and inevitable sequence.

After the indictment of young Parkyn, Boss Hen-

nessy was a very busy man. He made several trips to B . . . and "saw" everybody of importance who was likely to be in the least interested in the trial.

The Boss was a coarse worker if needs must, but he knew when to "draw it fine." He set about his work on this occasion in a manner far more subtle and smooth than might have been expected from one of his gross fibre and inferior quality of intellect, and with a degree of success which showed that one often can accomplish more with cunning than with brains.

Hennessy was particularly careful to "play up" the poor man who "earned his living by the sweat of his brow" and who, according to the verdict of the coroner's jury, had been killed by a man whose education and position in life should have taught him better things.

When talking to men whose positions depended upon the favor of politics, Hennessy did not forget to subtly suggest the political value of attention to one's patriotic duty. This did yeoman service in fanning the flame of resentment against such barbarous crimes as "the murder of that poor, unfortunate working-man."

The railroad officials, who naturally might have been expected to aid Parkyn, even granting that he really had committed the killing in the discharge of what obviously was his duty, did not offer to aid him in any way. Indeed, the officers of the road took full advantage of the opportunity to ingratiate themselves into the good will of the public by displaying a virtuous horror of the crime, and a hypocritical desire to see the slayer of the poor laborer given his just deserts.

Then, too, the railway company had troubles of its own and was not greatly concerned with the fate of brawlers and murderers, save insofar as a display of interest might be of advantage to the corporation itself.

Sundry conversations with Boss Hennessy had much to do with the public-spirited and pro-labor views of the railroad officials. His indignation at the slaying of one of his honest, hard-working laborers, was the more infectious because of its apparent sincerity.

The Boss did not fail to casually convey his sentiments to the editor of The Clarion, the leading weekly newspaper of B . . . The editor was fully impressed, as was to have been expected, inasmuch as he did the county printing—a profitable graft that had been given him for his invaluable political services.

The Clarion was noted for the "fairness and punch" of its editorial utterances, and its editor had become an oracle whose opinion it was almost sacrilege to question. The reputation of the paper for altruism and the desire for justice to all men were well substantiated by its editorials on the murder.

While deploring the "exigencies of our economic system, and deploring still more any acts of lawlessness or violence incidental to strikes," the editor recognized the fact that differences of opinion as to labor values between employer and employe were unavoidable. He felt sure, however, that matters were fast arriving at a point where mutual concessions would lead to "harmonious agreement for the peaceable settlement of all such differences."

Having thus smugly and virtuously avoided com-

mitting himself on the great question at issue, the editor proceeded to "deeply deplore and view with alarm the awful crime committed almost in our very midst." And he did not fail to speak in behalf of those "honest sons of toil," from whose ranks the late Giulio Maggioli had been so suddenly removed "by the hand of the assassin."

Then there were "the educated and more cultured classes," whose duty it was "to set a worthy example for the toiling millions, treat them kindly and give them their due meed of appreciation for the noble part they bear in the world's work and progress."

Here, the editor grew almost maudlin: "And to think that an educated, presumably refined young man of good family and inferentially proper rearing has been indicted for so heinous a crime as the murder of a poor, honest, hard-working laborer!"

The editor did not overlook the opportunity to call attention to "the *entente cordiale* existing between the murdered man's country and these United States." This, he contended, was a point "well worthy of thoughtful consideration by every law-abiding, patriotic citizen of the great commonwealth of New York, and of this great country of ours—a country that stands for liberty, equal rights and brotherly love."

"How can we expect considerate treatment of our citizens abroad," he pleaded, "if we condone such awful crimes perpetrated by our citizens upon those of other and friendly lands?"

This was a particularly telling point with the *clientéle* of The Clarion. Some of the readers did not know what an *entente cordiale* was, but all of them knew that it was not one of the many canned break-

fast foods offered for their morning nourishment and that it must, therefore, be something awe-inspiring. That it was something that involved our national honor was made plain by the editorial. It also was made evident that, whatever it might be, it was a good thing for Uncle Sam to have in the house, so the readers of The Clarion were duly impressed with the duty of every law-abiding patriot to defend the *entente cordiale,* with his very life, if need be.

The editor was as careful to enjoin the readers of The Clarion to withhold their judgment of the case, as he was adroitly to impress upon their minds the belief that the prisoner, Parkyn, was guilty.

"The accused man"—here the editor rose to the very heights of rhetorical fancy and expression—"must not be permitted to suffer from any preconceived opinions or adverse sentiments on the part of the intelligent reading public." (This, of course, meant the readers of The Clarion). "Despite the verdict of the coroner's jury, the minds of our citizens should remain open."

The editor concluded his column of cant and hypocrisy with a fulsome and glowing eulogy of Mr. Thomas Hennessy, who had "devoted so much of his valuable time to aiding the dispensation of justice in behalf of the working man. Regrettable as was the awful crime," it offered as a slight compensation "the remarkable demonstration of interest in public affairs by so busy and important a man as the Honorable Mr. Hennessy, of New York," whose interest in the working-man in general, and the "fatherly interest" which he took in the men employed by him on his large contracts, were in the opinion of the editor worthy of special praise and emulation.

Quoth the editorial: "While the circumstances that brought Mr. Hennessy to B . . . were most deplorable, our citizens are to be congratulated on the opportunity thus afforded to become more intimately acquainted with one of the most striking figures of our great metropolis. Few men command such respect and admiration for their sterling qualities, as does the Honorable Thomas Hennessy, a statesman and public-spirited citizen of whom New York may well be proud."

The editor wound up his flattering tribute to "one of the nation's truly great men," by intimating that the "gubernatorial chair" at Albany long had been yearning Hennessyward, and expressed the hope that the great man finally would "sacrifice himself on the altar of patriotism and, yielding to the solicitations of his host of friends," consent to occupy said chair.

Being taken seriously and gravely quoted by certain metropolitan papers, the editorial created considerable excitement in New York's underworld. Visions of the displacement of the high-brow grafter by the respectable crook so crowded the dreams of the denizens of gang-land, that their nights were peopled with fairies turning the very cobbles of the pavement into diamonds, and their days were full of rainbows and pots of gold. As "Limpy Joe" Schintzler expressed it:

"De gang'll have some pull, b'lieve me, an' every right guy'll get his bit, w'en de Boss gits up ter Albany."

Being one of Five Points' heroes, since a "harness bull" put his right leg out of commission with a regulation-38, one night when he was caught "sticking up a lush" and had "lammed," not unwise-

ly, but too slowly, Joe's sage prediction was received with loud and appreciative acclaim.

Nobody laughed except Bull Hennessy himself. He never had read Æsop, but nevertheless, the political fox couldn't fool him. He knew that he could do everything *but* sing that part of the political chorus, and announced to all and sundry that he never could be cajoled into dropping a real good piece of political cheese to provide a dinner for the opposition fox. The gang, however, set this down as an evidence of modesty on his part.

Each suggestive visit that Mr. Hennessy made to B . . . in the furtherance of his zealous attempts to aid justice in attaining her ends, was hailed with repetitions by different persons of the warm eulogies that had been heaped upon him.

On one of these visits Mr. Hennessy took occasion to secure an introduction to the Reverend Ezekiel Perkins, the rector of B . . .'s most fashionable church. Like many of his cloth, the reverend gentleman was of the earth earthy and realized that certain material advantages might accrue from acquaintance with the Boss, hence, when he assured that worthy that he was delighted to meet him, the clergyman really did not compound a felony with his conscience, although the Boss subsequently said that the "gospel sharp wasn't no slouch at throwin' the bull-con."

The conversation between Hennessy and the Reverend Perkins was rather brief, because of the paucity of topics of mutual interest. The Boss never had sought the society of people of the upper world who, perchance, might yearn to save his soul or improve his mind, while the clergyman was not wont to dig very deeply into the lower social strata in quest of

souls that really needed salvation. The Boss regarded "the man above" as a fellow who always had his price, and the reverend gentleman was born too soon to follow the advice of that genial philosopher, Mr. George Ade, who said: "In uplifting the masses, get underneath."

There was no common ground on which Hennessy and the preacher could meet, save this: In the course of the conversation the Boss delicately intimated that it really was too bad that the good citizens of B . . . had not endeavored to soften the heart of the man who was awaiting trial for the murder of that poor Italian laborer, whom, Mr. Hennessy, had put upon the railroad construction job and thus innocently sent to his death. Here the Boss heaved a hypocritic sigh so deep that it agitated the very bowels of him, inspiring a reciprocal and equally sincere responsive sigh on the part of the Reverend Perkins and making the clergyman's duty as clear as day.

"Ah! My dear Mr. Hennessy, it remained for you, a layman, to point out to us the pathway of duty," replied the clergyman, rolling his eyes heavenward. "We have been—er, most remiss, my dear sir, most remiss. I myself shall call upon the prisoner and do my—er, feeble best, to guide his feet into the paths of repentance and—er, of peace. I thank you from the bottom of my heart, Mr. Hennessy—from the bottom of my heart, sir, I thank you, for thus kindly reminding me of—er, my inattention to the call of professional duty."

To give the devil his due, it must be confessed that neither Mr. Hennessy nor the Reverend Perkins was favorably impressed with the other. They vied with each other, however, in singing their mutual praises,

whenever the occasion was auspicious and the praises likely to bring forth fruit. But politics ever has made strange bedfellows, and a combination of church politics and the ordinary or garden variety might have been expected to make a most incongruous, even if effective, combination.

The clergyman took occasion the following morning to call upon the prisoner. Parkyn received him cordially enough and listened politely to his preliminary remarks upon the weather—a topic of great interest to a man in jail—but before the clergyman's visit was concluded, the two men were decidedly at loggerheads.

For a time the clergyman went along swimmingly with his tender offices of consolation and fine display of sympathetic interest—which he did not feel any more than a phonograph feels the words that flow through it. Indeed, the comparison is hardly just to the phonograph, for the sounds that emanate from it under the tracery of the needle are a mechanical reflex of impressions that really have been made upon the cylinder. If, however, it should be contended that the comparison is fair enough, because the impression made upon the wax goes no deeper than the surface, one would be constrained to agree.

"I trust, my dear young friend," bleated the Reverend Perkins, tentatively launching out into deeper water, "that you will meet the ordeal of your trial with—er, Christian faith and fortitude."

"I'll do my best, sir, to meet it with fortitude of some kind," replied Parkyn. "I am not, however, a professed Christian, and I fear that the conditions with which I am faced are not likely to change me in that respect."

"Am I to understand, my dear young friend, that you really are not a Christian?" asked the clergyman, apparently horrified.

"Precisely, and I am not going to be frightened or bullied into an expression of faith in something in which I do not believe," replied the prisoner dryly; "I may not be made of hero stuff, but I'm not exactly a coward, sir."

"What! Do you mean that you are a—a free-thinker—you, a young man on the threshold of—er, life?"

"Yes, that is exactly what I am, a free-thinker—and I began young. I wish," continued the young man, bitterly, "that I could believe you to be right about the threshold of life, but I'm afraid that I may be on the threshold of something quite different."

"But, my dear sir, now is the accepted time—er, for you to turn your thoughts heavenward. Believe in Jesus, my dear young friend, and your soul will be filled with the peace and comfort that can come to you in no other way."

"I believe that Jesus was a great and good man, Mr. Perkins, which is as far as I can go with you in that direction—and that is hardly what you want," replied Parkyn. "But," he went on, gloomily, "I fancy that confidence in my lawyer would help me more in the matter of facing the ordeal I am to meet. Be that as it may, however, I shall have to ask you to excuse me from entering into a discussion of spiritual matters. I respect your right to your personal views of such things, but I claim the same right myself."

"Am I to understand then, that you er—refuse the kind offices of—er, the church?"

"Since you put it that way, yes," rejoined the

prisoner. "Nor do I see how I consistently could do otherwise. So long as my mentality is intact, I shall entertain the same views in trouble that I do out of it. My views may be wrong, but they are quite as likely to be sound as any I might be stampeded into by fear."

"Young man," said the clergyman, coldly, rising and preparing to take his leave, "I am not surprised that you have come to this. Your obduracy shocks me. You display a hardness and lack of amenability to religious counsel that are positively horrifying."

"I am truly sorry if anything I have said has ruffled your feelings, sir, but I can not stultify myself by a pretense of belief in anything that does not seem to me to be based upon logical premises. If you sincerely wish to help me, why not try and pound some sense into the heads of those idiots upon whose testimony I am imprisoned for a murder I did not commit. Supposing you intercede with God," he continued, satirically, "and see if you can't get Him to inspire those witnesses with a clear vision of the events of that awful night when that poor Italian was killed. Your intercession might induce the Almighty to undo the mischief that has been done me with His full knowledge and consent."

Here, apparently, was a magnificent opportunity for a theologic argument, but the prospect did not seem alluring to the Reverend Perkins. On the contrary, he appeared somewhat perturbed and ill at ease. His face grew red and his eyes actually bulged with his violent efforts to suppress the angry emotions which so ill become a gentleman of the cloth.

"I will bid you good morning, sir," said the clergyman, stiffly, when he finally recovered his

self-possession sufficiently to permit him to speak with something of his wonted dignity.

"Good morning," returned Parkyn, apathetically.

The Reverend Perkins departed in high dudgeon. The rejection of his pious offices hit him hard. He did not wait for the jailor to close the door behind him, but slammed it shut with a vicious bang that plainly said, "Get thee behind me, Satan!"

As the huge key turned in the lock with a creaking sound and the rusty bolt shot into place, the prisoner wearily exclaimed:

"There are worse things than being alone, even in jail!"

The following Sunday the church over which the Reverend Ezekiel Perkins presided was, if possible, even more crowded than usual with the élite of B . . . The congregation comprised a large part of the wealth—and fashion, such as it was—of the thriving town, while, as for culture, there were many of the elect who claimed that their pastor had a corner on that particular commodity.

The Reverend Perkins was the beau ideal of fashionable clergymen. He had the gift of fervid, sonorous oratory, which, combined with paucity of ideas and a verbal flux, is very taking with persons who mistake noise for argument and dogmatism for truth. In the minds of his devotees, the holy man occupied a place which would have made team-work by Socrates, Plato, Cicero and Demosthenes sound like a Salvation Army street-corner exhortation. As for such moderns as Talmage and Beecher, these weaklings were not to be mentioned on the same page of biography with the Reverend Ezekiel.

On this particular Sabbath morning, the reverend doctor was especially eloquent and convincing—the more so as he had gone far afield for his theme and spoke upon "Our duties as citizens of a Christian community."

He waxed especially eloquent over "the duty of protecting the dear ones at home and upholding the integrity of that noble institution, the family.

"And the dear little children, those bulwarks of our nation—we should remember them, *and* cherish them, *and* guard them, *and* save them for our great and glorious country, by bringing them into the church—the only laboratory in which citizens worthy of the name ever can be made.

"And those who have wealth, and those who have culture, and those who have education, and those who have social position, should remember the poor *and* the ignorant, *and* the sinful *and* the down-trodden and be mindful that they too, have rights which every just man is bound to respect *and* conserve, *and* protect *and* guard."

The Reverend Perkins now soared into the oratorical empyrean and recklessly plucked sputtering rhetorical stars wherewith to garnish his discourse, until it resembled an evening display of fireworks on the Fourth of July. His audience was on the very heights of emotional exaltation when he began gently sliding down to earth and spoke in awed, throaty, "gargling" tones of the "recent frightful murder" that had been "committed almost at our very thresholds."

He spoke fervently of the "menace to society" which the "misunderstanding of the well-to-do by the working-man" so often brought about.

"We all are most deeply concerned with the wel-

fare of the honest working-man—the bone and sinew of our social system, and we all wish, for him, prosperity *and* comfort *and* happiness. Alas! that he cannot always understand."

The despairing sigh emitted by the fountain of pious eloquence at this point duly impressed his auditors with the density of the working-man's perception.

The clergyman now spoke of the recent strike. He was per-fervid in his remarks at this point. The cockles of his heart always warmed when he thought of the railroad and steamboat passes that were so snugly ensconsed in the wallet which lay in his left breast pocket, close to the heart aforesaid.

"The railroads, those great arteries of trade and progress, those pioneer agencies that so steadily extend the frontiers of civilization—the railroads! What could we do without them? How many thousands of honest folk are housed, *and* fed *and* clothed *and* educated by those great philanthropic institutions, the railroads!"

The reverend doctor was quite sure that railroad strikes were "due to a misunderstanding and lack of appreciation of the beneficences of those noble institutions, the railroads, on the part of the persons who were most directly benefited by them." He also was sure that the time soon would come when God would "inspire the working-man with a more intelligent understanding of the benevolence of capital—capital, which is so indispensable to all enterprise and progress."

The recent murder of "an honest laborer" on the New York Central was especially deplorable because such incidents were "used by unprincipled men to widen the breach between capital and labor." And

to think that the man who then was lying in prison, awaiting trial for the awful deed, was "a man who had enjoyed all the advantages which education and social opportunities could give! What an awful example for the upper classes to set for the toiling millions!"

"Think," he quavered dramatically, his voice surcharged with emotion, "think of the dear wife and little ones who, somewhere on the vine-clad slopes of sunny Italy, await the coming of that dear husband and father who lies cold in death and will return no more. What a dreadful burden that dear family must be on the conscience of him who committed the awful deed!"

To be sure, the clergyman had not investigated the antecedents of the late Giulio Maggioli, who was an unmarried man, plus, but oratorical license covers a multitude of misstatements, and too close scrutiny of the dead man's history would have spoiled its effect.

The reverend orator now proceeded to depict in most forbidding colors the attitude of the accused man toward religion. Never, in all his professional career, had he met a person "so obdurate or so sacrilegious," as the man who was "awaiting trial for murder" in the county jail at B . . .

"But," the clergyman hypocritically cautioned his hearers, " we must not allow our desire to vindicate the law and punish the guilty, to interfere with our sense of justice."

At this point Dr. Perkins caught sight of Boss Hennessy, who was sitting in the rear of the church listening with great interest to the clergyman's flow of eloquence. This was the preacher's cue for several minutes of oratorical pyrotechnics, eulogistic

of "one of New York's most distinguished citizens, temporarily sojourning in our midst."

The reverend doctor especially eulogized the interest which that great citizen, Mr. Hennessy, displayed in "his desire to see justice meted out to him who had *so* cold-bloodedly, *so* ruthlessly, *so* barbarously, *so* relentlessly, *so* suddenly and without warning, sent the poor workman to meet his God." This interest on Hennessy's part the clergyman accepted as final and conclusive proof of the tender concern which "the great, *and* the wealthy, *and* the powerful" entertained for "the poor, *and* the down-trodden, *and* the toiling masses of the land."

The reverend gentleman now prayed a most urgent prayer, in which he implored God to bless everybody who, in his estimation, was worth saving, from "that dear family in sunny Italy," to the officers of the New York Central, and from the State's Attorney, to that good and great man, Mr. Hennessy. He did not forget the poor, and also condescended to ask God to bless the President of the United States!

It was noticeable that the preacher did not ask God to bless the unfortunate man who was lying in the county jail. He did not forget him, however, but asked that his heart be softened and his ear made receptive to the teachings of Christianity.

Mr. Hennessy was so moved by the sermon and the prayer following it that he ostentatiously deposited a twenty dollar bill upon the plate. The Reverend Ezekiel, from his point of vantage in the pulpit, did not fail to note the great man's liberality. The sight gave him much joy, and he rubbed his palms together in unctuous satisfaction.

At the conclusion of the services, the lambs, the

sheep, the goats and the wolves of the congregation filed solemnly out of the church, their faces set in the placid contentment of the belief that, with the careful and explicit instructions given the Lord by their able pastor, He could not fail to comprehend His duty. The fervent supplications of the Reverend Perkins could not but move God's compassion for the special benefit of those whose intermediary he was that Sabbath morning. The country, they felt, was secure—for had not their pastor blessed the President? As for that family in Italy, they, too were safe.

The next issue of The Clarion gave considerable space to a report of the sermon of that "eloquent divine, Dr. Ezekiel Perkins." The sermon also was featured in the editorial columns, the editor embracing the opportunity to rehash his previous comments on the murder and the individual who was "awaiting trial for the awful deed." The editorial made an especially strong plea for the pulpit as a popular educator, and felicitated the town of B . . . on the fact that so enlightened and progressive a man as the Reverend Dr. Perkins occupied so prominent a pulpit and exercised such a "powerful influence in up-lifting the masses and moulding public sentiment."

The reverend doctor's remarks regarding the murder were quoted verbatim. Great stress was laid upon the duty of the commonwealth in the matter of a fair and impartial trial. This, the editor felt confident, was a matter in which the town of B . . . was greatly to be congratulated. Judge Wilson, "our eminent jurist," before whom the case was to

be tried, was as noted for "the fairness and impartiality" with which he dispensed justice as he was for his "profound knowledge of the law." As for Mr. Sharples, "our eminent State's Attorney," he could at all times "be relied upon to do his duty." The accused man was especially fortunate—editorially—in being arraigned by one so eminently fair, and still more to be congratulated on the circumstance that his case was to be tried before "so just and learned a jurist."

The editorial was especially concerned in advising the citizens that they must withhold judgment as to the guilt of the prisoner and not allow their minds to become prejudiced, notwithstanding the heinousness of the crime of which he was accused. Nor should they allow the callosity of heart which he had exhibited toward "the kind religious offices tendered by the Reverend Perkins, to bias their judgment of the prisoner's guilt." Not only the judges and the officers of the court, but the entire public at large should regard the approaching trial with fair and open minds.

The editor again took occasion to laud Mr. Hennessy, "that great man who once more is in our midst on his public-spirited mission of furthering, so far as lies in his power, the ends of justice."

Here followed a lurid recapitulation of the killing in all its details, which adroitly suggested to the reader the impression that the fracas between the workmen had been deliberately planned by a naturally desperate character for the purpose of enabling him to commit cold-blooded murder.

This part of the editorial was read over by Boss Hennessy with the feeling that even a "lobster"

like the editor of The Clarion, could tell the truth without reserve or malice aforethought, and with perfect safety to the parties most interested, so long as the aforesaid truth was merely the haphazard drivel in which some editors are wont to indulge. He shrugged his shoulders suggestively, however, as he thought how significant the editorial might have been if supported by a knowledge of the real facts.

The details of the coroner's inquest and the verdict also were rehashed by the paper, said details being made as gruesome as the editor's knowledge of emotion-stirring adjectives permitted.

Between The Clarion's editorials, the Reverend Ezekiel Perkins' sermon and the subtle influence of Boss Hennessy, a proper ethical attitude toward the prisoner on the part of B . . . and its environs was reasonably well assured. Not that these influences were absolutely essential to the creation of the desired impression. The citizens of H . . . County had not forgotten the original report of the coroner's inquest on the body of the slain Italian. With this still fresh in their minds anything further really was supererogation. Having been told who the guilty man was, there was no difficulty in surrounding themselves with the atmosphere of "open-mindedness" which was so essential to a fair and impartial trial of an accused person by a jury of his peers.

So favorable to fairness and open-mindedness was the atmosphere of B . . . that people began to wonder if the jail was sufficiently secure to hold a criminal so desperate and hardened as Parkyn. The strongest doors and most intricate locks had been

insufficient to hold characters far less desperate than he. Doors and windows in B . . . came to be locked with extra care, whilst in the country-side round about, locks and bars were affixed to doors that never before were locked or barred. No curfew was necessary to hustle the children in at night. They went to bed right after supper, and the youngster who did not dream that the awful criminal in the county jail had broken out and was "after" him, was envied by his fellows.

Young Parkyn was duly cognizant and appreciative of the efforts of The Clarion, the preacher and Boss Hennessy in preparing an atmosphere for his case. He was permitted, after a grave consultation between the jailer and the State's Atorney, to read the papers as freely as he pleased.

The public prosecutor was not apprehensive that the prisoner would derive from the papers any information that would prejudice the interests of the state. Especially had he no objection to the editorials of The Clarion and the wonderful sermons of the Reverend Dr. Perkins. Indeed, the State's Attorney rather enjoyed the thought of the somewhat dubious consolation which the prisoner was likely to derive from such literature.

Mr. Sharples, be it remarked, disliked young Parkyn for reasons other than those incidental to his own official position and his duty as a citizen. Very much against his will the lawyer instinctively recognized in the prisoner a man of birth, breeding and education far superior to his own. This, as is not rare with certain small natures, aroused in him a spirit of resentment.

In the opinion of the State's Attorney it was not

enough that the young man was heart-broken over his predicament; he rightfully should have been crushed into worm-like humility. But he was not; his indomitable spirit, pride, and his consciousness of innocence shone through the goom of his tribulations in a manner most disturbing to the self-conceit of the really ignorant and uncultured Sharples.

Immediately after Parkyn's incarceration in the county jail, Mr. Sharples enlisted the aid of the jailer and undertook to put the prisoner through a crude imitation of the "third degree." The attorney was desirous of appearing up-to-date, and the opportunity of acquiring fame through inducing the young man to confess the crime of which he stood accused, seemed a short cut to the approbation of the citizens of the county.

But he reckoned without Parkyn, who proved to be a very bad actor in the little drama planned for his entertainment. Instead of receiving the third degree in the spirit of deep humility which should pervade the bosom of a really docile prisoner, he not only resented the methods of his inquisitors, but finally picked the jailer up bodily and threatened to use him as a club wherewith to knock out the prosecutor's brains.

Being inexperienced in metropolitan police methods and having no competent assistant at hand, the State's Attorney and the jailer parted company with the prisoner as quickly as they could without climbing out of the window.

Oddly enough, the jailer was much kinder to the prisoner after this episode, probably because he was grateful to the young athlete for not having used him for a club without due and proper warning,

rather than as an expression of his gratitude for the narrow escape experienced by Mr. Sharples' brains.

Unlike the jailer, however, the State's Attorney was not a good sport, and consequently would not forgive the prisoner for his recalcitrancy. Sharples resented his failure to secure a confession as an injury personal to himself, and consquently needed no whip or spur to impel him to do his patriotic duty of securing the conviction of Robert Parkyn at the earliest possible moment.

Halloran soon discovered that Boss Hennessy was busily engaged in creating sentiment adverse to the young engineer and, without in the least knowing the reason for his animosity, took occasion to remonstrate with him, in a deferential way, as became one who was indebted to the great man for his own position.

The Boss's reply was hypocritically impersonal and consistent with his avowed belief in the prisoner's guilt and his pretended indignation at the death of the unfortunate laborer. As Halloran expressed it to Parkyn, "Anybody'd think that dead Guinea was Bull Hennessy's brother."

Through it all Hennessy's attitude toward Halloran was apparently friendly enough, but he nevertheless resolved to "break" the foreman if ever he got "gay."

Chapter XI

LABORERS WORTHY OF THEIR HIRE

The law permits the lowest and most desperate criminal to have the benefit of counsel. He may select his own—of such quality and quantity as his money can buy. If he has no money he has counsel thrust upon him, for the law is very jealous of its reputation for fairness and makes a fine show of protecting it. Having regularly employed a prosecutor to land the accused man in jail, or on the scaffold, paying this functionary a premium of money and glory if he succeeds, and this official having all the power and resources of the state behind him, the consistency and benevolence of the law is touching.

Out of the philanthropy of the law has sprung the criminal lawyer, who for glory or for hire endeavors to antidote the prosaic venom of the law and, by hook or crook—often largely "crook"—prevent the public prosecutor from getting his pound of hard-earned flesh.

It apparently did not occur to the Solons who framed our criminal laws, that what was needed was not a public prosecutor, but a public trial lawyer to impartially investigate the merits of a case as the representative of all the people—of which the accused is an integer.

Still jealous of its reputation for fairness, and to relieve its conscience of the burden of the lawyer

who prosecutes and the lawyer who defends, the law has given us a jury of our "peers."

Exactly how this works out in a criminal trial is not clear, unless it be that the average criminal is ignorant, and the law feels obligated to prove its point by endeavoring to exclude from the jury box all but the deplorably stupid and ignorant.

What a thankless task is that of the criminal lawyer! We glorify, but never quite forgive him, if he saves even his guilty client, any more than we forgive that other anachronism, the public prosecutor, if he does not prove himself worthy of his hire by doing his full share in keeping our prisons full and feeding victims to our halters and electric chairs.

Securing an attorney for his defense was a serious problem for young Parkyn. The item of money was a most important one. Until his assignment to the railroad construction work at A . . ., his salary had been so meager that he was unable to save much, while as for his salary in his new position, he had not yet had time to accumulate any savings. The young man had no friends who could have aided him if they would, save John Halloran, and that good-hearted soul himself had very little of this world's goods.

Lawyers, and especially good ones, cost money, and it was obvious to both Parkyn and his friend Halloran, that they had but little latitude in the matter of securing counsel. Especially was it clear that eminent lawyers from a distance were not to be thought of. It was evident, therefore, that the accused man perforce would be compelled to rely upon local talent.

Halloran was willing to go the limit in assisting the young man, but even after borrowing several hundred dollars to add to his own and Parkyn's scanty resources, that "limit" was not much. The noble fellow, however, determined to do the best he could.

It was not easy to secure a lawyer in B . . . The atmosphere of public fair-and-open-mindedness so assiduously cultivated by the various factors mentioned in the previous chapter, offered difficulties.

Defending a man accused of a heinous crime who was pre-judged, was not likely to bring prestige to a lawyer. Failure to acquit apparently was a foregone conclusion and there was no particular glory in that, while, as for acquittal, the man who secured it probably would live to rue his success, if he depended on his fees for a livelihood. There was not enough criminal practice in B . . . county to offer very fat picking.

Halloran, however, finally found a lawyer among the dozen or so in B . . ., who consented to take the case. He was a new-comer, whose shingle had been thrown to the breeze only a few months before.

Whether desperation at his briefless condition, the probability of being assigned the case by the court, or the modest fee tendered him by Halloran was the consideration that impelled Mr. Arthur Hazelton to take Parkyn's case, is an open question, but the fact that he needed the money probably is a sufficient explanation.

The lawyer's older and more experienced brethren said that he was a fool. This explanation of his

conduct in voluntarily taking the case might have had more weight, were it not that young professional men always have been stamped as fools the instant they have bobbed up in competition with their elders.

Mr. Hazelton was the fortunate possessor of an assurance which could not be either starved out, or mitigated by any appearance of unpopularity. That he was a great lawyer, he himself thoroughly believed—he had been the valedictorian of his class. Happily for the young man, he did not know that in the cemetery of dead hopes the ambitions of thousands upon thousands of valedictorians lie buried. The dust and rust of the passing centuries are thickest on the yellowing pages of valedictory manuscripts.

Hazelton had a certain native cunning which, when opportunity knocks at the door, usually brings success if conditions are at all propitious. The public is so fond of "phony" metal that it is eager to bite at a bare professional hook.

Even when it is not backed by legal lore, cunning is irresistible in the profession. An old metropolitan lawyer of great fame and learning and a known "jury fixer," who had amassed a large fortune in his profession, once remarked, "I never in my life tried but one case on the square, and I lost that one."

Not to draw invidious parallels, it may be stated that Hazelton, some years later, moved to a large eastern city and finally became both rich and famous —his fame resting upon the same secure foundation as did that of the gentleman who has just been quoted.

The Honorable Mr. Hennessy learned that Parkyn had retained counsel and promptly investigated the merits of Mr. Hazelton. The result convinced the Boss that, so far as legal acumen was concerned, there was nothing to fear from that quarter—which point was not so very important after all, for even if Hazelton had been wise as Solomon, the legal mesh in which Parkyn was entangled would have been too much for the young lawyer.

There was one little circumstance in connection with the coroner's inquest, however, that disquieted the Boss. He was not quite certain that the relative calibers of the ball that killed the Italian, and the pistol used by Parkyn, were not a source of danger against which he should guard himself. Hazelton might be a fool, but even fools have a way of "kicking the fat into the fire."

The point in question might not be dangerous and even if it were, might not be brought out at the trial, but it would not do to take any chances, and Hennessy believed in a sure thing. And so the Boss saw Hazelton—and, metaphorically, also "saw" the modest fee the lawyer had received from John Halloran for Parkyn's defense and "went it several better."

Money? Oh, no; the veteran politician was too astute for that, and, what was quite as much to the point, he was something of a bargain hunter.

The Boss took care that his acquaintance with Hazelton began apparently in the most casual manner in Mr. Barney Mulligan's saloon, a most convenient place for those who had not met Boss Hennessy, to become acquainted, not only with the great man's

personality, but with the power and influence he wielded throughout the state and especially in New York City.

It may be observed that Mr. Mulligan's political knowledge and influence in politics were by no means local. What he and some of his patrons did not know about the Boss hardly would have been sufficient for a theme for the Reverend Mr. Perkins.

Mulligan introduced the two gentlemen at a meeting that was not so casual as it seemed, Hennessy having beforehand expressed to the proprietor of the doggery a desire to meet Mr. Hazelton.

The saloon-keeper may have drawn his own inferences from this desire of the Boss's but he was a wise politician and never delved into things which, as he intelligently expressed it, took "no skin offen me own nose."

The harmless-looking frame-up was easy. Mulligan merely sent word to Hazelton that he would like to have him call at his place on a little matter of professional business. The lawyer stood not upon his dignity nor the order of his going, but hastened to carry his burden of legal lore to Mr. Mulligan with the fell design of unloading some of it upon him, at a price which he hoped would be agreeable to all parties concerned.

After Mr. Hazelton had rendered a profoundly learned and verbose opinion upon the merits of a little difficulty his client had got into by "trowin' de boots into a guy dat stuck up de house fer a round o' drinks," and had received a ten dollar bill therefor, the eminent legal light was invited to "have somethin' on de house."

Mr. Hennessy was on hand and was included in the invitation. Hazelton was introduced to him in a manner designed to impress the lawyer with the idea that he was the most favored of men in being permitted to meet the redoubtable Boss. As Hazelton already knew the great man by reputation, this was not difficult.

In the course of several rounds of drinks, in the negotiation of which he displayed a roll of bills of large denomination, big enough to choke the traditional horse, Hennessy adroitly took advantage of an opening made for him by Mulligan, who casually mentioned the approaching trial and felicitated the accused man on having retained "the smartest lawyer in th' hull d——d county, be gobs!"

The Boss was quick to note the lack of enthusiasm that underlay the bombast with which Hazelton proclaimed the things he was going to do in the coming trial, and immediately launched into an explanation of his own interest in the affair, in which the American eagle was made to scream most vociferously over the woes of the honest working man and the virtues of the great philanthropists who gave them employment. The Boss waxed especially wroth over the conduct of those who, by violence and ill-advised counsel, created disturbances embroiling capital and labor. And then he spoke of his love for the toilers whom he employed on labor contracts, and the awful shock he experienced from the recent killing of one of his "best men" at A . . ., a crime that was one of the most atrocious ever committed in the state of New York.

"There ain't no doubt in me own mind," he ob-

served, pompously, "as ter who done the killin', an' I'm thinkin' there ain't much doubt what's goin' ter happen. But of course," he continued, cajolingly, "I'm glad he's goin' ter have a chance fer his life by havin' a fine lawyer like you ter make the fight fer him."

Mr. Hennessy soon bade the lawyer good night and went his way, leaving the saloonkeeper to finish the work he had begun. And Mulligan certainly did his part. By the time Hazelton, a little the worse for wear incidental to several more rounds of booze, wended his way homeward, he was convinced that the Boss's good-will was a short cut to wealth and fame, while as for his friendship—the lawyer grew dizzy, or rather, dizzier, at the alluring prospect.

As the days went by, the suggestion of the obvious which had been so cleverly implanted in the mind of Mr. Hazelton, grew into the settled conviction that a too vigorous or too clever defense of his poverty-stricken client, who was foredoomed to conviction anyway, was not the royal road to the things most desirable in life. In brief, it would get him nothing. Inspired by this dominant idea, the lawyer resolved to take the circuitous and broad highway in his upward path to fame and spoils.

Before leaving for New York, Hennessy had a formal interview with Dr. Danford, the coroner's physician, who made the autopsy on the body of Giulio Maggioli.

The Boss adroitly submitted the matter of his health to the doctor and discussed with him the subject of his "bum kidneys," as gravely as though

the medical gentleman had been a top-notch metropolitan consultant, listening to the physician's sage advice with a deference and respectful attention to the minutest detail that would have flattered greater men than Dr. Danford.

The outcome of the interview was highly satisfactory to both gentlemen. When they separated, the physician, like Mr. Hazelton, had rosy visions of future affluence and political and professional advancement through the influence and patronage of the Boss. What was more to the point, safely ensconed in the doctor's pocket was a substantial roll of bills of goodly face value which, with an insistency that really was unnecessary, the Boss had thrust upon him at the conclusion of the professional consultation.

Although Dr. Danford was inwardly astounded that anybody ever should have discovered that his services had a high market value, the distinguished patient experienced little difficulty in convincing him that he most highly appreciated the value of a busy professional man's time.

It had not been easy for the doctor to eke out an existence for his rather numerous family, to say nothing of providing himself with the wherewithal to buy "nose paint" for those whose influence he regarded as necessary to holding down his political job. He had been used to people slapping him on the back in lieu of a fee and familiarly addressing him as "Doc"—a term which bears the same relation to "Doctor," that "gent" does to "gentleman"—ever since he entered practice. When, therefore, Boss Hennessy tendered him a gratuity of startling proportions, he was constrained to agree with his

patient's estimate of the value of professional knowledge.

Be it remarked that, despite the awful inward struggle which the physician experienced in warding off heart failure at the sight of so much real money all in one bundle, he finally managed to subdue his emotions sufficiently to enable him to accept it with an air that suggested familiarity with large fees—which in no wise deceived Boss Hennessy. He knew the breed; the political Doc long since had ceased to be a novelty to him.

Following the professional "consultation" the Boss incidentally led the conversation to the murder of Giulio Maggioli.

After Dr. Danford had been duly impressed with the great interest Mr. Hennessy took in the working man in general, and in the fate of the unfortunate Italian in particular, the Boss proceeded to business.

"Ye didn't show the ball at the inquest, did ye?" he asked casually.

"No, I forgot it."

"Yes, so ye said at the time. But o' course the bullet didn't cut any ice, anyhow. The case was as plain as the nose on yer face—it was a pipe."

The physician politely overlooked the somewhat pointed allusion to the most salient and highly illuminated feature of his physiognomy and agreed as to the "pipe."

"That feller Parkyn," continued the Boss, "ain't got a ghost of a chance. If the witnesses that testified at the coroner's inquest stick to their stories at the trial, there'll be nothin' to it, an' he'll get what's comin' to him—the murderin' scoundrel!"

"Oh, there'll be no falling down in the evidence,"

replied the doctor. "It was too direct. Of course," he added, "some of the witnesses might go astray and—"

"Git lost in the shuffle, eh?" interrupted Hennessy. "Well don't lose any sleep over that, Doc. None of 'em ain't goin' ter git lost, unless they croaks." The Boss's confident expression suggested that he knew whereof he spoke.

"By the way, Doc," he said, blandly, "don't mind if I smoke, do ye?"

"Not in the least."

The Boss dove down in his pocket and produced his usual handful of pudgy black perfectos.

"Have one, Doc?"

The doctor having thankfully accepted a weed, the two lighted their cigars and settled down with an air of greatly increased sociability and intimate mutual understanding.

"Say, Doc," said Hennessy, suddenly, "I'd like ter see that ball, if ye don't mind."

"Surely you may."

The doctor went to the drawer in his desk, unlocked it, took from it the bullet, and handed it to the Boss.

The instant his fingers closed on the ball, Hennessy knew that his instinctive impression of danger in the direction of that small piece of lead was correct. He glanced at it with the eye of experience as it lay in his palm, and barely repressed a start of dismay. The ball was a .32 and he recalled that the gun with which Parkyn was accused of doing the killing was plainly of a larger caliber—a .38!

The Boss also recalled something else, almost equally to the point: Butch Harris had a peculiarity that was a perennial source of jest in gang-land—

he carried a .32 "rod!" As Butch explained it, a larger caliber not only wasted perfectly good lead, but gave a fellow a lot of useless iron to pack around. He hunted men, not deer, and at close range, and not unreasonably claimed that when a fellow could skillfully handle a .32, a larger bore was superfluous. Then, too, it wasn't so noisy as a larger caliber, a point of most vital importance. The sensitive ears of the "bulls" must be protected.

"All right, Butch," thought Hennessy, as he looked at the ball, "we'll let it go at that—for the present."

"Funny, ain't it, Doc," observed the Boss, reflectively, "how a little chunk o' lead like that'll fix a feller's clock?"

"Not if you know anatomy," said the doctor, pompously, serenely confident that the Boss was not likely to discover his new medical adviser's own deficiencies in that direction.

"When a lump o' that stuff strikes the right spot," the doctor continued, "it's all off."

"Wish you'd let me take this for a few days, Doc," said Hennessy, carelessly, reflectively balancing the pellet of lead in his hand.

"Oh, I couldn't do that!" protested the astonished doctor, "you see, I——"

Hennessy did not wait for the obvious explanation.

"Oh, that's all right, Doc. I'm hep to all that dope," he replied, "but this yere bullet ain't goin' ter git lost, an' nobody ain't goin' ter git wise that I've got it. See?"

"But what—?"

"Just want ter show it to a doctor friend o' mine that's studyin' up such things," interjected Hen-

nessy, forestalling the doctor's question. "I'll bring it back to ye in a few days. I've got ter see ye again about them kidneys o' mine, anyhow."

The Boss coolly picked up a piece of paper from the doctor's desk, carefully wrapped the ball in it and put the package in his vest pocket before the doctor could have stopped him, even had he been sufficiently collected to do so.

"Come on, Doc!" exclaimed Hennessy, familiarly slapping the doctor on the back, and fairly rattling his teeth; "lets go down ter the hotel and have a snifter. Got ter be good ter them old kidneys o' mine, ye know. The right kind o' medical advice comes high—and," he said, significantly, "I've got ter see ye again."

Now Dr. Danford was not essentially a vicious man, nor absolutely callous to all sense of duty, but he was an irresolute character. Boss Hennessy had taken him by storm and, possession being nine points of the law, held the whip hand. Then, too, juggling with evidence for one interest or another, was not so strange to the doctor as to be really startling. Besides, how could he set about recovering the *corpus delicti* without offending a profitable client—a man whose influence was likely to be immensely valunable, if he could but enlist it in his own behalf. As for retaking the bullet by force, one glance at Hennessy's burly frame and bull-dog physiognomy was enough to discourage any attempts in that direction.

And so, as many another weakling has done, the physician took the direction of the least resistance —and most alluring prospective.

"You—you'll be very careful of the ball, Mr. Hen-

nessy—and—and you'll be sure to return it promptly?" he stammered.

"Surest thing ye know," replied the Boss, again slapping him vigorously on the back.

"Come on, me boy. Let's be movin', I'm so dry I'll be spittin' cotton in a minute." He looked at the clock on the doctor's mantel—"An' I hain't got any too much time before my train leaves."

Hennessy linked his arm in the doctor's and they started toward the hotel.

At the door of the hotel the doctor said hesitatingly, "You—you of course will not—"

"Rap?" replied the Boss, reading the doctor's thoughts. "What th' h——l d'ye take me for? Didn't I tell ye there wasn't anybody goin' ter git wise? Fergit it, me boy—fergit it!"

By the time Mr. Hennessy was compelled to bid Dr. Danford good night, the two were vying with each other in singing, "For he's a jolly good fellow, which nobody can deny!"

As for the doctor's conscience, or the slightest curiosity as to the Boss's intentions regarding the ball, they now were negligible quantities in his cosmos.

Chapter XII

SHORT SHRIFT

The stage setting was complete for a legal drama in which the law should doff its mantle of slow-moving majesty, and prove to a hitherto much abused public that the law was "right on the job" and resolved to vindicate itself in short order.

The trial was set for a term of court which was close at hand, and for an early day in that term. Other and less spectacular cases were set aside "by mutual agreement of counsel" to facilitate the hurry-up prosecution of the case of The State vs. Robert Parkyn.

This expeditious action was duly and favorably commented on, not only by the local press, but by the papers of the larger cities in the state, as an example for the guidance of their own legal authorities. This greatly redounded to the glory of B . . and caused the citizens of the entire county to regard with acutely swollen pride those great and faithful public servants whose fidelity to duty had thus aggrandized them.

The Clarion blew sundry additional editorial blasts designed to increase the chestiness of the legal authorities and of the people of B . . ., and the Reverend Ezekiel Perkins delivered another soul-stirring discourse on the "Call to Civic Duty," which in turn was reported in extenso and fulsomely praised by The Clarion.

It was noticeable that the dominant note in the utterances of both the Reverend Perkins and The Clarion was not joy over the promise of a speedy trial of the prisoner which would shorten his suspense and the time of his imprisonment in the dingy jail of B . . ., but the prospect of an immediate vindication of justice and the punishment of a hardened criminal—with more advice to the public to maintain an attitude of "open-mindedness."

All the conditions favored a "rush" job of legal dispensation. The law had found another "goat." With the exception of John Halloran there was no one but his mother who was especially interested in the accused. The few friends of the family who still were loyal to Mrs. Parkyn, really believed the young man guilty of murder, while pretending in the presence of his mother to disbelieve it.

Halloran, as we have seen, stood by to the best of his ability, but he was without influence and his financial resources had been strained to the utmost in retaining a lawyer for the young engineer's defense. As Parkyn himself had neither political nor social prestige, there was nothing to postpone the trial or influence public opinion in his favor.

The law usually moves slowly through its jungles and labyrinths of delays and haltings. This slow progression possibly is responsible for the euphemism, the "majesty" of the law. Majesty implies something imperial, wise, all-powerful, greatly to be admired and respected—something to be obeyed without question. To the minds of certain folk—who, whilst revering the spirit of the law, are not blinded by the glamour and glitter of its machinery

—it sometimes also suggests an arrogant, pompous, congested, tortoise-like thing, from which emanate refined cruelties, flagrant injustice, piratical depredations, stupid or venal deductions, asinine conclusions and absurd application of facts, or even of misinformation.

Noting these things we can better understand the overt and anti-social acts of those poor, crack-brained, impractical fools—anarchists and dreamers, "bull in the china shop" theorists—who "buck" the law. We also can better understand the psychology of the many turbulent, unthinking men, who, observing the law's inconsistencies and inefficiency, are even constrained to believe that, after all, Judge Lynch sometimes builds wiser than he knows.

But the law has dignity, an admirable, mind-concealing carriage of the body of which man has no monopoly. The owl, the eagle, the goose and the snail—all have dignity. But the owl can not see in the light; the eagle preys upon the lambs; the goose wabbles most ridiculously and the snail—

The law being man-made, albeit behind it stands the shadow of the ten commandments—for the law of man has devoured all *but* the shadow of the law of God—why quarrel with its deficiencies? Having set our despot upon the throne, let us bow the knee, not only to his virtues, but also to all his vices, crimes and defects—thus rendering unto royalty that which is royalty's.

"Great Caesar, we who are about to rob, or to be robbed, to imprison, or to be imprisoned, to kill or to be killed, salute you!"

How we boast of the despot's beneficence if he does not turn his thumb down—when our own lives

or worldly goods are hanging in the balance! If only he would not sell himself to the devil, or to politics, trusts and corporations—which is much the same thing.

The slow movements of the law—known and disrespected of all men who live, or struggle to live, under its protecting banner—have many apologists and defenders, but all excuses fall to the ground in view of the fact that when the powers that rule us so desire, they are perfectly capable of making most strenuous and active "grand-stand" plays.

Lunatics who murder presidents and mayors, and those who murder or assault men great in politics and finance, get short shrift.

Backed by politics, popular excitement or public opinion, the law can move swiftly and inexorably enough to satisfy the most exacting tax-payer who wants to know what he gets for his money. It is then that the spirit of Judge Lynch touches the hem of the royal robe of the law itself.

When a "goat" is found, he is disposed of with indecent haste, greatly to the glory of the law, and especially of some police authorities who welcome an opportunity to hoodwink the tax-payer into the belief that he gets value received.

The penniless and friendless man who is accused of crime often is made to feel that the law can move rapidly enough. Even if his trial is slow in coming, the law has him in the toils, just the same. He lies in jail friendless, bailless and forgotten until the machinery of the law gets good and ready to take cognizance of him, while his more fortunate, because richer or more powerful, and too often guiltier, brother walks the streets a free man. Even if

the poor man should be found not guilty, he has no redress. To him the law doth not give; from him it taketh away.

Until the American Bastiles have fallen, let those who, in default of bail, rot in vermin-infested jails for months whilst awaiting trial, be duly thankful that there are such holes to rot in, for it is thus that we inculcate respect for the law and stimulate the underdog to strive for better things.

The laborer for the killing of whom Robert Parkyn was indicted, was of no particular importance to anybody but himself, and was even an alien who had not yet qualified for citizenship. He was merely grist for the commercial mill in which great corporations grind human life into huge salaries and dividends—into wealth of which the producer is given only enough to keep body and soul together and enable him to produce more wealth. This, perhaps is unavoidable, for the giant corporations have such an abundance of water in their veins that it takes much of human life to nourish them.

Had one of his compatriots been indicted for killing Giulio Maggioli, there probably would have been very little excitement and still less social reaction. The law would have gone on its majestic way, serenely conscious that it had all the time there was, and that the time was all its own, not the tax-payer's.

But this was different. Here was an unexampled opportunity to pose for the applause of the downtrodden working-man and prove to him that everybody was equal before the law—something which he had not often had occasion to suspect. The toiling masses must be shown that men in positions of au-

thority, men like Parkyn, who had enjoyed both education and opportunities—and had no money—could not with impunity slay a poor working-man.

The time was most propitious for a play to the gallery. The strike had thrown the fear of God alike into the hearts of capitalists, politicians, corporations and the lily-white fungi on the body social who neither toil nor spin, but live on the wealth garnered by their ancestry. With these influences behind it the law could give full sway to its suddenly awakened sense of duty to the public.

The most captious critic of the operations of our criminal law could not have taken exception to the manner in which Parkyn's case was handled. The trial really was a model for dispensers of justice. Rarely does such unanimity of purpose pervade the entire personnel of those on whom devolves the unpleasant duty of vindicating, through the medium of the criminal courts, the outraged feelings of society.

Everybody and everything seemed to be especially harmonious in the matter of speed. The management of the case throughout was one of urgent haste and quick dispatch. It was as if judge, jury and attorneys for both sides had agreed that, inasmuch as conviction was certain anyway, it was best to hurry up matters and get the thing over with as quickly as consistent with due legal forms and customs.

The harmony between the public prosecutor and, save the mark, "the attorney for the defense," might have served as a lesson for those unenlightened laymen who believe that opposing counsel always engage in a bitter oratorical battle over the merits of the case. The exquisite courtesy that pre-

vailed between the State's Attorney, Mr. Sharples, and the distinguished Mr. Hazelton, was worthy of emulation by all budding scions of the legal tree.

The onlooker might have thought, and not unreasonably, that the two eminent legal lights were striving to show how learned counsel can combine in a harmonious effort to avoid all differences in the interpretation of the law which might embarrass the progress of justice. There was, to be sure, an outward seeming of controversy in the matter of selection of a jury, but apparently this was merely a sop thrown to the Cerberus of form and custom.

The material from which a jury finally was selected was as satisfactory as any conscientious public prosecutor could have desired. The most zealous and ardent defender of society's interests would have experienced difficulty in finding prospective jurymen who would have been less promising from the standpoint of the defense.

Mr. Hazelton was particularly fortunate in that an outcome of the case disastrous to his client hardly could be charged to ignorance or lack of enthusiasm on the part of his attorney. His obvious defense would have been that that particular jury had tried the case and prepared a verdict long before its members ever were gathered in by the venire.

It is proverbial that our legal system has tacitly established the rule that any semblance of intelligence or the slightest interest in human affairs is conclusive evidence of unfitness for jury service. From this view-point the venire in Parkyn's case had been so carefully drawn that the ends of justice of necessity must have been conserved.

The prospective jurors looked as wise as so many

Solomons. As Parkyn inspected them he wondered how on earth the court managed to find so many beards in a single county. Such a miscellaneous collection of whiskers would have excited comment in almost any civilized community. And colors! It would have been hard to conceive of a more incongruous assortment of color effects in hirsute adornment. Not only was there a wide diversity of color among individual beards, but many of them had a variegated arrangement of hues that was all their own. A number had an over-lay of yellow-brown stain from tobacco juice that was as unesthetic as it was democratic. Some even had enough stale particles of food clinging to their whiskers to give one a fairly accurate idea of their dietary for several days past.

When whiskers became unfashionable, a very important index of facial character was lost. The patriarchal benignity and uncleanliness of the long, flowing beard, the punctilious neatness of the Van Dyke, the smug self-satisfaction of the bushy side-whisker; the servility and cold-bloodedness of the close-clipped mutton-chop, and the pious hypocrisy and sternness of the smooth upperlip super-added to the luxuriant beard of different forms, doubtless have impressed all students of physiognomy. Had such a student been in the prisoner's position, he could have derived very little comfort from a survey of the faces of the men who constituted the venire drawn in the case of the State of New York vs. Robert Parkyn.

There was a predominance of smooth upper lips associated with whiskers of the Uncle Sam "billy-goat" type, or with the familiar "Rooney" whisker.

The occasional sweeping full beard and mustache in the crowd merely served to make those smooth upper lips appear more austere and forbidding.

A small minority of the veniremen were clean-shaven. These were mainly towns-people, who seemed out of place among the hairy faces that surrounded them.

The usual farce was enacted during the empaneling of the jury.

Several men in the venire were excused on easily procured medical certificates of genuine or imaginary ailments, after which the real business of selecting a jury began.

All those examined had heard of the case; many, however, asserted that they had not read of it. The majority had formed an opinion. A few of the latter asserted that their opinions could be altered by the evidence, but from the grim lines in their faces the merest tyro in physiognomics could have seen that nothing short of evidential dynamite ever would have altered their preconceived opinions.

It was noteworthy that a very small proportion of those examined evidenced a desire to evade jury service. The majority showed an eagerness to serve that would have been refreshing to one familiar with the difficulties that beset the courts of our large cities in endeavoring to secure juries.

Whether patriotism or some less noble and more practical sentiment inspired the veniremen is an open question. It is possible that the promised break in the humdrum of a monotonous rural existence had its influence. Then, too, there was the rare opportunity of getting into the limelight of

publicity. Egotism is not altogether unknown, even among honest folk in rural communities.

The prosecution apparently was willing to take offhand, any twelve men from the venire—save and excepting several who did not believe in capital punishment and who therefore might have the quality of mercy that is not "strained."

It really was unnecessary to interrogate the veniremen with the smooth upper lips on the question of their attitude toward capital punishment. It was not difficult to surmise what lay behind those inflexible, steel-trap-like mouths. Most of these men would have hanged their grandmothers on convincing evidence of guilt of murder.

One poor, rheumy-eyed, trembling old man was at once excused by the judge. The old fellow needed no medical certificate to show that he was unfit for duty. He protested, however, that his health was good and that he was fully capable of competent jury service. So strong was the spirit of this palsied, senile patriot, and so evident was his probable attitude toward offenders against the law of the land, that the State's Attorney was fain to console himself for his rejection by the thought that the old fellow might not have lived through even a short trial.

Another venireman, who doubtless would have been acceptable—to the State's Attorney at least, if not to the defendant's attorney—was so obviously a half-wit, that the judge felt compelled to overlook the fact that the man was a juryman to the manner born, and excused him.

The next man examined was afflicted with an impediment of speech. He was most expeditiously discharged, to the great relief of all parties con-

cerned. It was evident that if he were accepted and any argument should arise during the deliberations of the jury, the stutterer inevitably would delay the game, and delay was a thing little desired by most of the parties immediately concerned—possibly even by the accused, thanks to the horrors of the county jail.

Still another man was plainly under the influence of liquor and was dismissed with a sharp reprimand from the judge.

There were in all not more than eight or ten challenges for cause by both sides.

The State's Attorney seemingly entertained a prejudice against persons who had worked in any capacity for railroads, although in the case in question his reason was not easy to surmise.

Mr. Hazelton, for his part, made a fine show of opposition to persons who were members of labor unions. This display of interest on the part of counsel for the defense was a showy play to the gallery which deceived some people in the courtroom into the belief that Hazelton really was conscientiously working for his client.

Mr. Sharples, however, smiled blandly as he thought of the number of farmers included in the venire who were not even interested in labor unions, much less members of them.

As to the people of the town who had been summoned, several of them were town bums and loafers who took no active interest in the labor problem and would have had some difficulty in paying tithes to unions. Noting these men the State's Attorney smiled again.

The defense challenged for cause three men who previously had served on juries in murder trials.

Several veniremen were accepted who had served on petit and grand juries and in various cases other than criminal. Professional jurymen, however, were not so much in evidence as they would have been in a more metropolitan community. This materially lightened the labors of the court.

There were no peremptory challenges. Neither side, apparently, was disposed to be captious, or to take advantage of the opportunities provided by law. This said much for the care with which the venire was drawn. The collection of veniremen was so homogeneous in appearance that the majority of them might have been taken for blood kin. A peremptory challenge would have served merely to substitute one be-whiskered Solomon for another, and thus to delay matters.

Probably not through inadvertence, but advisedly, two lone beardless individuals were accepted as jurymen. One of these was the proprietor of the general store in a near-by village, who had presided over so many round-the-cuspidor sessions of public-spirited citizens who were wont to congregate about his stove and settle all momentous questions affecting the prosperity of the nation, that he had come to be considered an oracle.

Hiram Chase was short, fat and rubicund, with a bald, shiny poll ringed about with a "moth-eaten" gray fringe of hair, which seemed to be struggling to descend his beefy neck in search of a hiding place behind the stiff standing collar that he wore on all state occasions. His nose was bulbous, and of a tinge suggesting that it had been frosted from without and alcoholized from within. His fishy eyes, shaded by heavy, puffy lids that he seemingly could not open without special effort, peering through a pair of

heavy-rimmed spectacles gave his countenance an expression of profound, owlish wisdom.

The contrast between the squatty, almost hairless Mr. Chase and his gaunt, hairy, fellow-jurymen was as startling as it was amusing. He appeared to be of a species different from his colleagues, and as he sat there in the jury-box he resembled an over-sized Brownie, surrounded by a lot of be-whiskered scarecrows.

Whether because he was different, or because of the oracular prestige he enjoyed, would have been difficult to say, but his companions in the jury-box were very deferential to Mr. Chase, who accepted the deference shown him with the naturalness which habit only can confer. As he squinted at the audience from behind his heavy lids and puffed out his cheeks at the various telling points made by the attorneys, his appearance was most grotesque, suggesting a bullfrog in an attitude of solemn reflection.

The last man accepted was an ignorant mulatto who, despite his obvious density of mind and hairless countenance seemingly was eminently satisfactory to both sides. This juryman's mother, an unkempt, slatternly, coal-black wench of immense proportions, occupied throughout the trial a conspicuous place in the front row of the auditors, where she divided her time between snoring and gaping her adoration of her cross-bred offspring in the jury-box.

During the entire program of the trial the jury, to a man, appeared ineffably bored. Most of the court proceedings seemed to them entirely superfluous. Even during the more or less dramatic periods in the evidence, the jury evidently gave attention from morbid interest rather than because its

members believed that the matter in question had any immediate bearing on the merits of the case. At the conclusion of the interesting point, the jury dropped back into its bored, lethargic attitude. A few of the jurymen even appeared to resent the dramatic periods as a disturbance of the dreamily reposeful attitude they had assumed at the beginning of their duties and which, had they not been disturbed by superfluous oratory and argument, might have been peacefully maintained to the end of the trial. When thus rudely aroused to a sense of their responsibilities, the injured expression of these jurors was most appealing.

Just as the empaneling of the jury was about completed, Boss Hennessy appeared at the door of the courtroom. He looked around and saw Dr. Danford sitting near Mr. Sharples. A moment later, the doctor looked toward the door and met Hennessy's glance. With an almost imperceptible motion of his head the Boss beckoned the physician to join him.

The doctor had been worrying considerably over Hennessy's failure to return the ball as he had agreed to do, and was greatly relieved when he saw his star patient's unattractive countenance peering into the courtroom. He hastened to join the Boss, who had moved away from the door and down the hall and was standing near the main entrance to the building.

"Hello, Doc!" greeted Hennessy, genially. "Did ye think I'd thrown ye in the air?"

The physician enthusiastically grasped the Boss's hand.

"By Jove! Mr. Hennessy," he exclaimed, with

indubitable sincerity; "I never in my life was so glad to see anybody. I thought you sure had slipped a cog somewhere."

"Nary a cog, Doc," replied Hennessy, "I was keepin' tab all right. I didn't see any use in showin' up 'till I was needed, an' besides, I had ter round up them Guineas."

"But the bullet," whispered the doctor, "have you—?"

"Sure, Mike! Ye didn't think I'd fall down on that, did ye?"

Dr. Danford looked furtively around and extended an expectant hand.

"Oh, that little Joker's all right, Doc. I've got it right here in me keck," and the Boss tapped his trousers pocket. "I'll slip it to ye, bye an' bye. Come an' let's have a drink. There's plenty o' time."

The two men repaired to the hotel across the street and had several rounds of liquor. By the time they returned to the courtroom, which they did separately, the physician was on very good terms with both himself and with the world at large—especially was he on good terms with Mr. Hennessy.

As they discreetly parted at the door of the hotel, the Boss handed the doctor a small package wrapped in tissue paper.

"There she is, Doc, right side up with care."

Dr. Danford took the package, put it in his vest pocket, thanked Mr. Hennessy and gave a pungently spirituous sigh of relief.

Hennessy proved a true prophet regarding the appearance at the trial of the Italians who testified at the coroner's inquest. Only one of the five was mis-

sing, and as he was lying in Bellevue Hospital with a stiletto-thrust through one of his lungs, received at a little social event among his compatriots, the Boss was unable to deliver him in time for the trial. Several of the men who were wounded during the fight, but who were not summoned by the coroner, also were in court ready to testify. The Boss believed in giving good measure when he set about rounding up witnesses.

Butch Harris entered the courtroom just before Hennessy appeared at the door. He had come up from New York on the same train with the Boss, but they had held no communication *en route*.

As he sat waiting his turn on the witness stand, Butch appeared ill at ease. He was not especially apprehensive of danger to himself, but he was not fond of the atmosphere of courts, and the sight of judges and public prosecutors never had been pleasing to his eye or conducive to tranquility of his spirit. He felt pretty well fortified, however, in his rôle of star witness, more particularly as even the Boss himself did not know exactly what happened on the night of the murder. He realized that Hennessy was likely to do some pretty shrewd guessing, but under the circumstances that naturally was to be expected.

Butch had not taken his principal into his confidence, for he felt that, although he had been employed by the Boss to do Parkyn, the less Hennessy knew of the details of the killing of the Italian, the better. The thug had not forgotten the manner in which the Newark affair had been used upon him by the Boss as a club for his intimidation on the occasion of the frame-up at Black Bill's.

The Strangler had received by the underground a liberal amount of money which he well knew had come from Hennessy, but he realized that the Boss could not be connected with the killing of the Italian by any evidence whatsoever. The fates had been very kind to Hennessy, and the job that he put up on Parkyn had worked out in a manner as fortunate to himself as it was unexpected.

There was just a suspicion in Butch's mind that, while in his cups, he had talked too freely to his special female friend in New York. He subsequently had "pumped" her most adroitly, and had been unable to justify this suspicion, but the shadow of it remained. He knew the risk to the crook that lay in female companionship, and although he was quite certain that, even if he had talked too much, there was no immediate danger, the thought of even remote danger did not add to the attractiveness of the witness stand.

Hennessy caught Butch's eye several times and noting his henchman's uneasiness drew his own inferences, which were merely confirmatory of the conclusions he already had formed. As he had quite positive knowledge regarding the ball that slew the Italian, Hennessy found his contemplation of Butch highly entertaining.

Never was the pathway of justice smoother than in the case of the Commonwealth of New York against young Parkyn. The testimony was direct and the statements of the witnesses as explicit as could have been desired.

The four Italians reeled off their testimony without a hitch. Not even their limited knowledge of

English obscured the evidence they submitted. Each testified that he saw the accused fire the fatal shot. Each of the witnesses also testified that he himself was unarmed at the time of the murder and could not have been responsible for any of the shots fired during the fight.

The men who were wounded in the battle also were ideal witnesses for the State. They were blissfully ignorant as to how their hurts were received. They might have shot or stabbed themselves, for aught one could glean from their testimony. To their credit be it said, however, that they did not each and everyone lay their various hurts at Parkyn's door.

Hazelton did very little cross-examining of any of the Italians. He had neither enthusiasm nor loyalty to his client, but he was not utterly devoid of common sense. He knew better than to try to confuse the witnesses, while as for inducing them to contradict themselves, that was out of the question—they were too well drilled, and what little English they knew bore directly on the matter in hand. Then, too, the interpreter who had been secured by the court was a native born Italian, and could be relied upon to protect the witnesses from any admissions that might have shaken their testimony.

Although Hazelton's discretion was due to his desire to protect his professional prestige rather than to conserve the interests of his client, his policy nevertheless redounded to his credit in the minds of some of the better informed persons in the courtroom.

Hennessy was one of the exceptional wise ones whose admiration for Mr. Hazelton was not in-

creased by his astuteness in handling the witnesses. The Boss knew a thing or two, and chuckled inwardly.

Mr. Sharples was placidly content. The witnesses were ideal from his viewpoint, and he, of course, took no chances of injuring his case by questioning them further than was necessary.

Following the Italians came the star witness.

"William O'Connor," called Sharples.

Butch Harris slouched forward, twisting his hat in his tremendous hands and looking at the floor in a hang-dog fashion which so exasperated Hennessy, who was watching him closely, that he felt an almost uncontrollable impulse to kick him as he passed through the crowd. As Butch went up the several steps leading to the witness-box he stubbed his toe and nearly fell, knocking over the chair provided for the witnesses and making a tremendous clatter.

The crowd tittered audibly at the awkwardness of the witness, but the bailiff, a decrepit, one-eyed fellow in a faded military coat bearing a Grand Army button in the lapel, pounded vigorously on the clerk's desk and the audience subsided into a quiet grin.

The witness having been duly sworn, Mr. Sharples proceeded with his examination. The crowd craned its collective neck and cocked its ears attentively.

"What is your name?"

"William O'Connor, sorr," mumbled Butch.

"Louder, please!" commanded Sharples. "Speak up, so the jury can hear you. What is your name?"

Butch raised his eyes and caught the malevolent stare and sneering smile of Boss Hennessy. He straightened up with a jerk, scowled back at Hennessy and roared—

"William O'Connor, sorr!"

"I asked you to speak so the jury could hear you, sir. The jury is just at your right, not in New York City, and its members are not deaf, Mr. O'Connor," said the prosecutor.

Several in the audience chuckled delightedly, but quickly subsided under the fierce glare of the bailiff's lonely eye.

"What is your business, Mr. O'Connor?"

"Oi'm a laborer, sorr."

"Where were you last employed?"

"On the New York Cintral, sorr, at A . . .

"Were you at A . . . during the strike on the 20th of July last?"

"Yis, sorr, Oi was."

"Were you in the employ of the New York Central at that time?"

"Yis, sorr."

"Did you participate in the strike?"

"Do yez mane was Oi afther strikin,' sorr?"

"Yes, that's what I mean."

"Yis, sorr. Oi sthruck along with the rist of the min."

"Was it a peaceful strike?"

"Paceful, was it? Shure an' it was as paceful as a dove."

"Were you in A . . . on the night of July 27th last?"

"Yis, sorr."

"Were the men still on strike?"

"Yis, sorr, they was."

"Mr. O'Connor, kindly state whether anything unusual occurred that night."

"Faith, an' there did that, sorr."

"What was the nature of it?"

"D'ye mane pfwat was it loike?"

"Yes, that's exactly what I mean."

"It was wan hell of a fight, sorr."

The bailiff forestalled any expression of merriment on the part of the audience by striking the desk a resounding whack.

"Never mind the emphasis, Mr. O'Connor," said the prosecutor. "Where did this fight occur?"

"In wan of the bunk-houses, sorr."

"Very good. Now, Mr. O'Connor, will you please tell the court, and in your own way, exactly what occurred."

"Well, sorr, Oi was afther walkin' down the road toward the bunk-house, whin Oi heard a divil of a row goin' on inside. Oi run towards the shack loike th' ould Nick was afther me, thinkin' Oi'd thry to sthop the fightin'. Just as Oi was goin' into the bunk-house, the Superintindent, Misther Parkyn, passes by me an' rushes into the mix-up."

"By the mix-up, you mean the fight, I presume, Mr. O'Connor," interrupted Mr. Sharples.

"Yis, sorr. There was h'about a dozen o' them blawsted bloomin' Dagoes a fightin' like bloody 'ell, an'—"

Butch caught himself just in time. His lapse into his native dialect was not observed by anyone but Hennessy, who half rose from his seat at the sound of it, and by Halloran and the prisoner, who exchanged meaning glances. The State's Attorney merely noticed Butch's hesitancy and looked at him curiously.

Halloran leaned over and whispered in Hazelton's ear. The attorney shrugged his shoulders and ignored the foreman's comment.

"Go on, sir," resumed Sharples.

"Well, sorr," continued the witness, regaining

his equanimity, "Oi followed afther Misther Parkyn, thinkin' he was afther tryin' ter shtop the fight. The first thing Oi knowed, iverybody was a-shootin' an' stabbin' loike the very divil."

"Did the prisoner at the bar, Mr. Parkyn, have a pistol?"

"Y—yis, sorr," replied the witness, with a fine display of reluctance.

"Did the prisoner fire his pistol?"

"Y—yis, sorr."

"Kindly tell what happened."

"Well, ye see, it was loike this, sorr. Wan o' the min grabbed hold o' Misther Parkyn an' was pushin' him across the flure, when all of a sudden the superintendent takes a crack at him wid his gun an' drops him deader'n a nit, sorr."

"What was the name of the man whom you say the superintendent dropped?"

Butch mopped his forehead with a not too recently laundered handkerchief.

"Begorra, sorr, thim Guinea names is too hard for me. It sounded like Jewelry Maggots, or the loikes o' that."

The crowd snickered and the humorless bailiff gave a smart rap with his gavel.

"Was the murdered man's name Giulio Maggioli?" continued the prosecutor.

"That's it, sorr," rejoined Butch, thankfully.

"You are sure that it was the prisoner that fired the shot that killed Giulio Maggioli?"

"Yis, sorr."

"Did you see any weapons in the hands of the men who were fighting, before the prisoner sprang upon them?"

"N—no, sorr."

"Were you armed, Mr. O'Connor?"

"Divil a bit, sorr. Oi'm a paceable man, an' don't loike gun-fightin', sorr."

Hennessy was all alive at this point and tried to catch the witness's eye. Butch, however, was decidedly on his guard.

"Did you see any weapon of any kind in the hand of Giulio Maggioli?"

"No, sorr."

"Did you at any subsequent time see the body of Giulio Maggioli?"

"Yis, sorr. Oi was at the inquest the coroner was afther makin' on the Guinea, sorr."

"You may take the witness, Mr. Hazelton," said the State's Attorney, blandly.

Hazelton plainly was nonplussed. He could see no opening anywhere and realized that it would be impossible to give a cross-examination which would show even the ear-marks of a battle in the interests of his client. It was plain that anything he might bring out would merely serve to clinch the damning evidence already offered by the prosecution and emphasize the hopelessness of Parkyn's case. This obviously would not be likely to enhance Hazelton's own professional reputation, and this consideration was paramount in the attorney's mind. He was about to dismiss the witness, as the easiest way out of the predicament, when John Halloran, who sat at his elbow, whispered a suggestion to him.

"Mr. O'Connor," asked Hazelton, "did you hear any shots fired before Parkyn and yourself entered the bunk-house?"

"Divil a shot, sorr."

"You are sure of that?"

"Yis, sorr."

"That will do, sir."

There was an expression of relief on Butch's countenance as he came down from the witness stand and awkwardly shambled back into the crowd. Mr. Sharples smiled significantly at the jury, who looked as bored as could have been expected of men compelled to listen to evidence which was mere supererogation.

"Ye cooked that Dago all right, me bucko," said the Boss to himself as Butch passed him on his way to his seat, "but we're not goin' ter chew the rag over it. Things are in d——d good shape, an' we'll let it go at that. If ye ever get gay an' I wanter put the screws ter ye, it'll be a pipe;" and he chuckled to himself as he tapped the pocket in which lay a small, battered pellet of lead.

"Dr. Danford," called the prosecutor.

The county physician took the stand and was sworn, after which the usual preliminaries establishing the indentity, occupation and official position of the witness were gone through with.

"Kindly tell the court, Doctor, whether on the 28th of July last you made an autopsy at A . . . on the body of Giulio Maggioli."

"I did."

"State what you found."

"I found a gun-shot wound in the left side of the chest. The ball had passed obliquely through the chest, traversing the heart, and emerged at the back of the right chest, where it lodged just beneath the skin."

"In your opinion, Doctor, was the gun-shot wound you have described the cause of Giulio Maggioli's death."

"It was."

"What was the immediate cause of death?"

"Shock and hemorrhage."

"Produced by the ball?"

"Yes, they undoubtedly were produced by the ball."

"Did you remove the ball?"

"Yes, sir."

"It it still in your possession?"

"It is."

"Kindly show it to the jury."

Dr. Danford took the ball from his pocket and removed the paper in which it was wrapped. As he did so his face paled, and his hand distinctly trembled. When the bullet, completely divested of its wrappings, finally lay in his hand, he gazed at it in mute astonishment. The missile was a changeling—a .38!

"Is the ball that you hold in your hand the identical one that you removed from the body of Giulio Maggioli?" pursued Sharples.

The witness gazed uncertainly toward Boss Hennessy, who returned his gaze with an icily indifferent stare, and the doctor, as usual, took the course of least resistance—and least risk.

"Yes, sir, the very same."

"Has the ball been out of your possession at any time since you extracted it from the body of Giulio Maggioli?"

"It has not."

"What is the caliber of the ball, Doctor?"

"It is a .38."

The prosecutor picked up the revolver that lay on the table beside him and handed it to the witness.

"Have you ever seen that pistol before, Doctor?"

"I have."

"When and where?"

"At the coroner's inquest on the body of Giulio Maggioli at A . . . on the 28th day of July last."

"Was it offered in evidence at the inquest?"

"Yes, it was identified as the gun with which the prisoner was accused of killing Maggioli."

"In your opinion, had the pistol recently been discharged?"

"Yes, sir."

"How many chambers?"

"One, sir."

"Is the weapon still loaded?"

"All but one chamber."

"Doctor, please state the caliber of the pistol you hold in your hand."

"It is a .38."

"Does the bullet you have in evidence fit the revolver you are holding?"

The doctor inserted the ball into the muzzle of the weapon.

"It does."

"What did you say was the caliber of that ball, Doctor?"

"A .38."

"Kindly hand the revolver and the ball to the jury, Mr. Bailiff!" said the prosecutor.

The bailiff obeyed, and when they had gone the rounds of the jurymen the exhibits were handed to Mr. Sharples, who laid them in plain view on the table at which he was standing.

"Take the witness, Mr. Hazelton," said the State's Attorney, urbanely, again glancing significantly at the jury, which, having become sufficiently aroused to grasp the morbidly sensational testimony

of the medical witness and listlessly examine the revolver and bullet, had resumed its expression of passivity.

Mr. Hazelton made a few inane objections during Dr. Danford's testimony, which promptly were overruled by the court, and he would have been glad to let matters rest, so far as the medical testimony was concerned. He felt, however, that he really must give his client a semblance of a run for his money and that here was as favorable an opportunity as he was likely to get, so he proceeded to cross-examine the witness in such a manner that if a single juror had been inclined to believe that the murdered man had died of heart failure from excitement and over-exertion, his mind would have been disabused of the notion by the positiveness with which Dr. Danford reiterated his testimony.

At the conclusion of Mr. Hazelton's cross-examination the doctor, with a sigh of relief, left the witness stand, nervously wiping his brow with a large silk handkerchief. He immediately left the court-room, excusing to himself his perjured testimony on the ground that it could not have been avoided, for he had not dared to acknowledge that the ball ever had been out of his hands. As matters stood, he had no fear of consequences, for he felt quite positive that, inasmuch as Hennessy was in a position as delicate as his own, he was insured against everything but his own conscience—and that was not especially acute.

The State's Attorney now called on the constables and the various citizens of A . . . who constituted the volunteer posse that stopped the fight among the laborers in which Giulio Maggioli was killed, and who had arrested Parkyn. Their testimony was

brief and to the point, its most damning feature being the statement made by each of them that Parkyn was found lying on the floor of the bunk-house with a revolver in his hand.

Each witness testified that the revolver apparently had been recently discharged, one chamber only being empty. The weapon submitted in evidence was identified as the one found in the prisoner's possession and subsequently shown at the coroner's inquest.

Just why Hennessy should have been called to the stand was not clear to anybody save that astute person himself and the State's Attorney, but as a human interest play it was superb. Under the adroit questioning of the prosecutor, the Boss made clear to the jury the honest and industrious character of the late Maggioli, and his own tender solicitude for all his employes. He brought tears to the eyes of the more susceptible persons in the audience, by his allusions to the imaginary bereaved family of the murdered man. As to the accused, he knew nothing, save that the superintendent apparently never was in sympathy with the men under him.

Butch listened with profound admiration to his principal's testimony.

"Just listen ter dat! H' ain't 'e de smooth guy?" muttered the thug to himself. " 'E's a daisy, 'e is! Me h'only h'aunt Maria! Wouldn't that cook ye? 'Is bloomin' wife an' bloody kids!"

It was significant that Mr. Sharples did not call Halloran to the stand. The State's Attorney evidently was willing to rest the prosecution at this point.

What course Hazelton now would have followed is a matter of conjecture. Possibly he too, would

have been pleased to have had the case rest here. Halloran, however, again leaned over and whispered to him. A brief and sharp whispered discussion followed, at the conclusion of which the attorney, apparently much against his will, after a brief conference with his client called the prisoner to the stand.

Parkyn was to all appearances calm and self-possessed through it all, and watched the court proceedings as curiously as his depressed and hopeless state of mind permitted. As he sized up the audience and the jury, and noted the pomposity of the judge, he would have laughed aloud, had his situation been less precarious. While Butch Harris was giving his testimony the young man was on the verge of an explosive protest. When his own name was called, he took the stand with a feeling of relief—the tension had become almost unbearable.

After the customary formalities and a few preliminary questions, Mr. Hazelton went in detail into the incidents of the night of the murder.

"Mr. Parkyn, where were you when the disturbance began in the bunk-house?"

"On the pier, a few rods away."

"Did you hear any shots fired?"

"Yes, I heard several shots."

"What did you do when you heard the noise of the fight among the men?"

"I ran as quickly as I could to the scene of the disturbance."

"For what purpose, Mr. Parkyn?"

"To stop the fight."

"Were you alone?"

"At first I was alone."

"And afterward?"

"I was joined by a laborer, named O'Connor."

"The same O'Connor who testified a few moments ago?"

"Yes, the same."

"Did you have a weapon, Mr. Parkyn?"

"In my pocket, yes."

"Did you at any time draw your pistol?"

"I did."

"For what reason?"

"Practically every man engaged in the fight had a weapon of some kind in his hand. I instinctively drew my revolver, hoping to intimidate the men and induce them to stop fighting."

"Did you fire the revolver?"

"I did not."

"Were you wounded during the fight?"

"I was. Somebody stabbed me in the thigh."

"Do you know who stabbed you?"

"I do not."

Hazelton hesitated for a moment and Halloran motioned to him. The attorney leaned over and Jack muttered a suggestion.

"Did you know the man who was killed in the fight that evening?" continued the lawyer.

"I did not. I could not even have identified him as one of the laborers on the construction job, had I seen him anywhere away from the work."

"Did you see him fall?"

"I did not."

"Do you know who shot him?"

"I do not."

Halloran again whispered to Hazelton.

"Were you in the habit of carrying a revolver?" continued the attorney.

"I was not; the foreman and I expected trouble, and Mr. Halloran suggested that I carry a re-

volver and supplied me with the weapon I had in my possession that evening."

"That will do, Mr. Parkyn," said Hazelton.

The State's Attorney now took the witness.

"You admit that you had a revolver at the time of the fight?"

"I do."

"Is this the revolver?"

"I could not say positively, but it was one like that."

"You state that you did not fire the revolver?"

"I do."

"Yet the evidence plainly shows that the weapon was discharged." Sharples looked meaningly at the jury. "How do you explain that?" he went on, maladroitly.

"I object, your honor!" exclaimed Hazelton.

"Objection sustained," said the Judge.

"I withdraw the objection, your honor," exclaimed counsel for the defense, hastily.

"I do not care to press the question, your honor," interposed Sharples, realizing his own blunder. "That is all, Mr. Parkyn."

"Mr. Parkyn," said Hazelton, "you may tell the jury just how your weapon came to be discharged."

"I hardly know. It was a double action and I suppose I must have pulled the trigger accidentally. My arm was extended above my head in the struggle with the men when the pistol went off. The ball must have gone over the heads of everybody."

The State's Attorney turned to the jury and smiled satirically. The jury responded with a look which showed that they were heartily in sympathy with Sharples' incredulity.

"That is all," said the attorney for the defense, glancing inquiringly at Mr. Sharples. The prosecutor nodded and Parkyn left the stand. After a moment's quiet consultation with Jack Halloran, Mr. Hazelton called him to the stand.

Halloran verified in every particular the testimony of the accused, as to the circumstances under which he became possessed of the revolver. Halloran testified also that he heard the superintendent calling for his assistance at the time the latter rushed into the shack to stop the fight. He further testified to finding several men lying wounded upon the floor of the bunk-house, Parkyn being among them, and also to finding the body of Giulio Maggioli.

The prosecutor did not cross-examine, but contented himself with another suggestive sneer directed at the jury, which sneer was quite as effective as he meant it to be, if the significant glances exchanged by the jurymen counted for anything.

Already ineffably bored, the jury, to a man, wore an expression of martyrdom during the speeches of the opposing attorneys. As the prosecuting attorney made his most telling points, the jurymen exchanged looks which plainly showed that they regarded his address as merely a conscientious attempt to give the state good measure. As for Hazelton's speech, the jury would have gone to sleep during its delivery, had its members not been so impressed with the sense of their own importance and a desire to convince the audience that they were a little the wisest aggregation of public-spirited citizens that B . . . ever had seen.

It was not without difficulty, however, that some of

the jurymen were able to preserve their official gravity. These gentlemen kept awake, but sat blinking like so many owls facing the sunlight, aggressively pointing their be-whiskered chins at Hazelton, as if defying his eloquence. His arguments, if so they might be charitably termed, were ignored altogether. Throughout both the speeches Mr. Chase's rubicund countenance resembled a Jack O' Lantern with the light out.

Sharples first ironically and cleverly apologized to the jury for reviewing the obvious before a body of such intelligent gentlemen. This shot evidently went home, with telling effect. The prosecutor made no effort at oratorical display, yet his denunciation of the prisoner was scathing and savage enough to please the most vindictive individual in the courtroom. His resumé of the evidence was brief, clear-cut and practically unassailable.

Mr. Sharples made a special point of the heinousness of the murder of a poor, hard-working laborer, by a man of education and presumed refinement. Only once was he in the least dramatic, and that was when he displayed the revolver and the fatal bullet to the jury.

During the entire address the State's Attorney's face wore the triumphant expression of one who is certain of winning his cause. He concluded by savagely demanding that the death penalty be inflicted on the prisoner.

If sophomoric oratory had been argument, Hazelton's speech might have been considered a most effective one. Under the circumstances, however, he merely succeeded in giving entertainment to the crowd in the courtroom. It must be admitted that the attorney made the best of a bad situation—he

could safely do this—but the dullest person in the audience should have been as thoroughly convinced as was he himself of the hopelessness of his cause.

He dwelt at length upon the lack of motive on the prisoner's part, and made a special point of the evidence that Parkyn was not in the habit of carrying a weapon. He also directed the attention of the jury to the fact that, in endeavoring to stop the fight on the evening of the murder, his client merely tried to do his obvious duty. He then enlarged upon the unreliability of the evidence of men who themselves were in a condition of mental excitement at the time the murder was committed.

In brief, the points made by the attorney for the defense were obvious, and only such as would have suggested themselves to the merest tyro in the law, and impressed the jury not at all. The nearest approach to a semblance of interest in the attorney's sophomoric oratory on the part of the jury, was a half-suppressed yawn from an occasional juryman who was sufficiently wide awake to be still impressionable.

As Hazelton concluded his speech with an impassioned appeal for the acquittal of his client, the entire jury roused itself into an amusedly tolerant appreciation of what it evidently regarded as a humorous effort on the attorney's part, rather than a serious attempt to save his client's life or liberty.

Against such an array of direct and convincing testimony as had been submitted by the prosecution, and with such a jury, the most enthusiastic and skillful lawyer in the world would have played a losing game. With a man like Hazelton, who was chiefly mindful of his own and not his client's interests, the result was not for a moment in doubt.

Hennessy chuckled softly to himself as he listened to the flamboyant address of the attorney for the defense. It was evident to the wily Boss that while his adroitness in handling the county physician had been fruitful in results, his visit to Hazelton was time wasted.

Judge Wilson's instructions to the jury were very brief, and comprised merely an interpretation of the rules of evidence in the case and a statement of the various degrees of murder as defined by the statutes of the State of New York. He concluded with the usual admonition to render a verdict in strict accordance with the law and the evidence.

As the jury filed out it was evident to everybody in the courtroom that its deliberations would be merely a concession to legal formality on the part of men whose minds already were unalterably made up.

During the speeches, Parkyn and Halloran were more than ever impressed with the mockery of the entire proceedings. The faces of both men showed that they knew the situation was hopeless.

Neither the prisoner nor his only friend looked at each other as the jury retired, but Halloran glared in Butch Harris' direction in a hostile fashion which suggested that the sturdy foreman would enjoy treating that worthy to a vigorous man-handling.

After unanimously electing Hiram Chase foreman, the jury occupied itself very briefly with the merits of the case. The evidence against Parkyn was so damningly convincing that the jury consumed very little time in its recapitulation. The only issue requiring discussion was the degree of murder and the

penalty therefor. Even here the instructions of the judge left little room for discussion, although several of the jury showed a blood-thirsty desire to convict the prisoner of murder in the first degree, and rush him to the gallows or to life imprisonment. These gentlemen, however, soon yielded to the arguments of their fellow jurymen and within thirty minutes the jury had arrived at a verdict, returned to the court-room and solemnly filed into the box.

"Gentlemen," asked the judge, "have you arrived at a verdict?"

"We have, your honor," answered the foreman.

"What is your verdict?"

"We, the jury, find the prisoner guilty of murder in the second degree and recommend imprisonment for a term of twenty years, as provided by law."

"Mr. Clerk," said the judge, "you will please poll the jury."

Each juryman having stated his agreement with the verdict as stated by the foreman, the court formally pronounced sentence.

Judge Wilson himself was not unmindful of the opportunity afforded him to make a play to the gallery, and was more than impressive in his remarks in passing sentence upon Parkyn. He was careful that the audience should not overlook his breadth, fairness and humaneness of spirit.

The judge's remarks were so much in harmony with the expressions of the Reverend Dr. Perkins and the editorial utterances of The Clarion, that the audience could not fail to appreciate the salient points of his speech as agreeing with public opinion.

"Robert Parkyn," concluded the judge, "you will please stand." The prisoner wearily rose to his feet.

"You have been duly tried and found guilty of

the murder of Giulio Maggioli, as set forth in the indictment. The sentence of the court is that you be confined in the State Penitentiary at Sing Sing, for a term of twenty years. The court recommends to you such behavior while in prison, as will secure for you the advantages which the law has so beneficently provided for good conduct on the part of those undergoing punishment for anti-social acts."

The crowd slowly left the courtroom and dispersed with that feeling of tranquil security which every good citizen should experience when the law has been vindicated and society has avenged itself upon one of its erring integers.

Parkyn and his friend Halloran were the only individuals in the courtroom who were not thoroughly satisfied with the outcome of the trial.

BOOK II

Chapter XIII

THE NEW DEAL

Towards the commencement of the last quarter of that period of boasted progress, the nineteenth century, a glimmer of intelligence in the study of criminology and the management of crime began to permeate the dense brain of that most excellent and stupid creature, Society—which is so fond of devouring its own children.

The Italian school of criminologists was yet to come, but there already were a few devoted spirits in whose veins the milk of human kindness flowed and whose warm hearts were more interested in the great brotherhood of man—in the here and now—than in the glimmering halos and twanging harps of a mythical and mystical future. These devoted ones were beginning to blaze a path to a condition on earth in which things should be done as it is promised they shall be done in heaven.

These strong men and women—born half a century before their time and therefore out of tune with the social orchestra—were endeavoring to place the responsibility of crime where it obviously belonged, at the door of Society itself. Society then, as now, allowed its degenerates to marry and reproduce their kind. It neglected both the mothers of the land and their children. It promised these children nothing for good behavior, but most condign punishment for any crimes they might one day commit

as a consequence of Society's own negligence. They were told that there were millions for punishment, but not one dollar to prevent young brands from getting into the burning. They never were assisted in being well-born or in remaining or becoming "good."

The State ever has been a bad parent for our "citizens in the making" and is itself criminally culpable for the downfall of most of those who stumble and fall by the wayside. It merely suspends the Damocles-like sword of punishment over the potential criminal's head, as a warning of what is in store for him if he goes wrong—and considers its duty done.

For some months, Sing Sing prison had been having troubles that were new and strange—troubles which astonished even the old-timers who were holding down jobs in the institution. A new warden had been appointed who, as the stand-patters expressed it, at once had proceeded to "raise particular hell" with penal orthodoxy.

The before mentioned "old-timers" were slow in comprehending what had struck them, and when the light finally dawned upon their minds, comprehension came with a distinct and severe shock. They "sat up and took notice" as did friend Nye in the Heathen Chinee. Like that ingenuous person, when he found that Ah Sin was cheating him "in the game he did not understand," the under-officials of the prison saw ruin staring them in the face, but unlike William they exhibited much discretion and "went" not for the disturber of their dreams.

Clever wardens and stupid wardens they often

before had met; wardens had come and gone, for cause or without it; among them had been both brutal wardens and kind wardens, but a warden with new ideas—and such ideas!—they never before had seen.

This phenomenal new warden, Major Donaldson, believed that the criminal should be regarded as a human being, even though the poor devil had no political pull. He did not believe in inhuman treatment, nor in severe or brutal punishment for infractions of discipline. Still less did he believe in filth, bad air and deprivation of sunlight as means of moral betterment for convicts.

The new prison head actually had the effrontery to claim that, to make a man better morally and mentally, he should be improved physically, and even had been heard to assert that prisons were colleges of crime, where the herding of young offenders with hardened criminals resulted in complete demoralization of many who might have been saved.

"This," said he, indignantly, was "worse than sending children with measles to a smallpox hospital for treatment."

Then there was his milk-and-water idea that misfortune and social stress played a more important rôle than natural sin in keeping up the census of prisons! "Unheard of and preposterous, a bomb aimed at the very foundations of society!"

And his theory that guards and under-wardens should be gentlemanly! "Monstrous!—as if gentility and considerateness on the part of prison officials possibly could make for the betterment of a low-down criminal!"

The new warden also had the queer notion that

a prison should be run on the lines of military discipline and etiquette—and especially etiquette!

Another idea of his, not so wishy-washy, was so abhorrent to ears polite that it must not be openly mentioned. He actually entertained the "barbarous" notion that confirmed criminals should be sterilized for the protection of generations yet unborn, and that the State should regulate marriage!

Finally—and this so shocked the orthodox old-time penologists that they are not yet done gasping—he was opposed to capital punishment!

The worst blow ever experienced by the Tammany bosses who had secured his appointment, was when their eyes were opened to their mistake by the publication in the daily press of one of the new warden's "fool speeches" at a certain scientific conference. Here are some of the awful heresies he perpetrated:

"The theory of punishment, like most archaic social theories, always has been very popular with the man in the street, while the corrupt governing political powers have used it for their own malevolent purposes of revenge, political skulduggery and graft—thus selfishly utilizing the popular fallacy that the Mosaic Law is the best means of social self-defense.

"To make men better never has been the aim or method of our penal system. To punish—ah! there's the specific for crime! Take the victim of Society's own stupidity—poor atom of our social dregs—try him, convict him, take him to the 'pen,' shave his head, clothe him in stripes, teach him the lock-step and house him with a fellow-prisoner in a cell, the cubic air capacity of which is not one-fifth of that required for human health, and how can he

help coming out of prison a worse citizen than before?

"Architectural genius for doing the wrong thing, combined with social imbecility, is most fertile in diabolic invention. Builders of prisons apparently always have taken special pains to protect the convict from the awful effects of fresh air and sunshine, by putting the cell houses as far away from the outside world as possible. Should any man treat a domestic animal with the same brutality and be caught at it, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals would arrest him forthwith, and the press would crucify him at the bar of public opinion.

"Exaggeration? Let those who believe that the lower animals are worse treated than our criminals, visit almost any of our prisons, and let him not listen, but look.

"The man who enters the gaol to be punished by a long term of imprisonment comes out a moral, spiritual and physical wreck, with the brand of the social pariah upon him and the prison pallor stamped on his face—and often with no recourse save to break back into jail.

"When, not long ago, a returned traveler pointed an accusing finger at Russian kameras—the prisons in which exiles and criminals are housed, en route to Siberia, with their buckets of filth and myriads of vermin—a philanthropist investigator described a part of 'darkest America,' the convict camps of the south, and showed that the same conditions prevailed there, save only that our more discreet southrons attach a ball and chain to the convict's leg—and the more humane Russians did not.

"Once the doors of a State's prison have closed upon a man, his individuality is lost and he becomes

a thing—a thing still animate, but colorless and and dead. He is no longer a man, but a near-living number.

"We might reform the man, but can we revive old ideals, or inspire new ones in the breast of a mere number?

"How easy it is to transform a man into a number, when once we get him within prison walls, but how difficult to re-transform that number into a man when liberty comes!

"Society never will wake up until it finds that it costs more to punish criminals and farm out convict labor than it does to prevent crime. Present day police systems, graft and punishment are anachronisms and social monstrosities.

"This is no disclaimer of human responsibility, but placing responsibility where it properly belongs, not on the shoulders of the individual but on those of Society."

To the criticism that he was advocating a crime "free for all," the Major replied:

"We cannot change the nature of a vicious dog by chain or collar or by beating. By the chain we merely keep him in hand and thereby protect ourselves from harm while humanely doing our best to improve him. If we fail, he should be permanently segregated, granting that there is any value in him. If not, he should be eliminated, just as a dog should be at once eliminated. These things should be done, not for social revenge, but for social protection. The theory of elimination, or even of segregation of criminals, is not the same as that of punishment. It merely implies social self-defense. Then, too, we always can breed better dogs; why not better men?"

Small wonder that Tammany gasped with dismay.

The blow the Major gave to the traditions of Sing Sing was the greater because of the fact that the political appointees of the institution were several shades tougher than the criminals whom it was their duty to guard and oversee.

The only balm that the new warden's official family could find in Gilead was the conviction that he could not long hold his job. Meanwhile they would have to endure him as best they might, as a mild sort of lunatic who was sure to "get his," sooner or later.

To the political and commercial "powers that prey," the most paralyzing discovery was that the new official was not "out for the coin," and, moreover, was dangerous to approach. Nothing could be "kissed through" the warden's office. He would neither graft nor be grafted, and that was all there was to it.

It requires little perspicacity to understand that Major Donaldson was soon *persona non grata* with Tammany. This, when freely translated into the *recherché* language of gangland, means that the old soldier was "in Dutch wit de bosses."

It was only a question of time when the bosses would "get" the major—and "get him good"—but they were discreet, there must be a "reason"—and no indecent haste.

How Major Donaldson ever "got by" and secured the appointment of warden at Sing Sing never has ceased to be a puzzle to the wise ones. It was a nine days' wonder, and was talked of for years after the grass had grown green over the dear old man's grave.

The people up-state had grown a bit tired of

Tammany domination, and had resolved to show the folks on Manhattan Island that the State of New York extended some miles further north than Spuyten Devil Creek and was not bounded on the west by the Hudson, nor on the east by the East River. They were "goin' to show 'em, you betcha!"

Around every "spit-box" in every little country grocery store and postoffice, gathered the reactionaries, bent on saving the state. Political opinions punctuated with liberal mouthfuls of tobacco juice were fired in volleys—with rarely a miss—and the partisans invariably voted the way they spat.

Among the patriotic members of the "round-the-spit-box clubs" throughout the state, were hundreds of old soldiers, men who had saved the country—for the Republican party at least. These men voted as formerly they shot—for principle—and also spat as they meant to vote.

The putrescent odor of the Boss Tweed-Tammany-Ring scandal still was in the air and would not down, but remained a stench in the nostrils of decency—and the old soldier always has had a very sensitive smelling apparatus.

Tammany had neglected the "old soldier in politics;" he was getting "peeved," and it was a bad time for such a peeve to develop.

The New York Democratic leaders were corrupt and venal, and obstinate as the traditional mule, but were not quite fools; they were wise enough to try to placate the old soldiers of the Empire State. This probably had more to do with the Major's appointment than had anything else.

It must be acknowledged that while Tammany made a great mistake in securing the appointment

of Major Donaldson, the mistake was natural enough. The civil service political bogey-man had not yet appeared on the horizon to disturb the grafter's dreams. Nobody ever was examined to see what his qualifications were—and never would be examined, if Tammany could help it. The game always was a two-edged sword and cut both ways. Then, too how was Tammany to know that the Major had freak ideas, and was the soul of honor? And besides, he was a Democrat and should be safe.

Once the Major was appointed, Tammany could do nothing but sit down and await developments, confident that if he made any "bad break" his case could be attended to "right."

Major Donaldson was comfortably well off and had numerous hobbies. Indeed some of his familiar critics had dubbed him "Bachelor of Hobbies," which appellation he accepted with his proverbial good humor and sense of the eternal fitness of things. Even without systematic occupation, his humane interests would have prevented him from stagnating, hence he really did not need office of any kind. His application for the position of warden at Sing Sing was made with the view of working out and perfecting some of his pet social-uplift theories. He was minded to write a book sometime, and knew that Sing Sing was a veritable gold mine for the development of the kind of experience and data he was seeking.

Rumor had it that the position of Warden at Sing Sing was one of the most profitable within the gift of New York politics. The bank accounts of some of the gentlemen who at various times had held the office showed that the job was a "gold

mine," almost in the literal sense. "Playing favorites" always has afforded fat picking in penal institutions.

Needless to say, the new warden did not take into his full confidence either Tammany or any other political powers that be, when he applied for the position. He was a pretty wise old fellow in many ways—even wise enough to wonder how long he could hold the job if he ever succeeded in getting it.

Major Donaldson was a striking figure. Tall, erect, soldierly in bearing and with a past-middle-aged accumulation of flesh which was just sufficient to give a corporeal backing to his dignified carriage, he was indeed imposing. His iron grey hair, healthily florid complexion, long, heavy, military moustache, keen blue eyes and Roman nose that reminded one of the beak of an eagle, suggested a picture of one of the Little Corporal's grenadiers of the guard, who had stepped out of his moldy frame into another epoch.

And spirit! It required but a glance at the old soldier to comprehend that behind and beneath all was that indomitable courage which, since the world began, has made for liberty, human rights and progress.

But there was one quality which the Major's martial appearance and brusque manner quite concealed. He carried in his bosom a heart overflowing with humane impulses and desire for the betterment of the under-dog in general, which the casual observer never would suspect. This quality was discoverable only by seeing him in action, fighting the battle of the down-trodden brother who had been crushed or cast aside by the social juggernaut. Verily, one could know the Major only by his works.

Reverting to his courage, the quality which men most admire in men, it had brought to Major Donaldson effulgent and well-earned glory at Gettysburg, Shiloh and elsewhere, but at Sing Sing!—

McCabe, the chief deputy-warden, a grizzled, gnarly, bluff old-timer, was one of the few officials of the prison who did not dislike the new chief. He really held the warden in high esteem—although grumbling at his "batty" ideas—and was willing to rest content with the harmless-though-demoralizing-lunacy theory of the old Major's peculiar views of penal administration and the management of criminals. Even the chief deputy, however, failed to appreciate the peculiar quality of courage exhibited by his chief in his line of duty at Sing Sing.

When McCabe discovered that Major Donaldson never carried a weapon he almost threw a fit. He relieved his mind at the earliest opportunity by announcing his remarkable discovery to the other deputies and guards.

"Say, boys," he exclaimed, excitedly, "d'ye know that the old man don't pack a rod?"

"The hell he don't!" shouted several of the officers. "What the devil does he carry, then?"

"Not a blasted thing, so help me God!" asserted McCabe, earnestly. "He ain't got a thing in his clothes bigger'n a pen-knife, an' that ain't big enough to even manicure one o' them lovely birds of ours."

"Well, I'll be damned!" yelled everybody in chorus. "What d'ye know about that?"

"An' the old duffer's puttin' murderers on for trusties!" exploded a guard named Gleason, derisively. He says that most of 'em is safer to trust than ordinary crooks. He'll need a gatt one o' these

fine days," growled the guard, "an' he'll need it damned bad, and," he went on in a lower tone, looking around cautiously to see if he was likely to be overheard by persons not in his confidence, "we'll need a new warden, I hope."

"Huh! You'd oughter like the Major, Gleason," retorted McCabe, sarcastically. "If he carried a gun, you might have reason to be jealous. He might go after yer score an' beat ye to it."

In the general and somewhat envious laugh excited by McCabe's satirical allusion to Gleason's brutal expertness in gun-play, the new warden's peculiarity temporarily was forgotten.

Chapter XIV

HELL ON THE HUDSON

It is to be hoped that the more fortunate citizens of the great commonwealth of New York will not be offended by the nomenclature applied to the state's best patronized hostelry. It is highly probable that the thousands upon thousands of her citizens who have been involuntarily entertained at the state's expense at Sing Sing will not take exception to the name herewith conferred upon that hospitable institution. It is probable, also, that a majority vote of present and former residents of the state's least popular inn will indorse the implication that the name "Sing Sing," originally was applied to the boarding-house in question, merely out of deference to euphony.

"Hell on the Hudson" would have been unesthetically coarse and painful to the ears of the good and pure citizens who are mulcted in tithes for the support of the institution. Especially would the more appropriate name have shocked the refined sensibilities of certain persons who long had been entitled to room and meal ticket at the state's expense, yet had been deprived of the privilege.

The devil is herewith apologized to, out of hand, for the implied libel on his domain.

Sing Sing Penitentiary today is essentially as it was at the time of the occurrence of the events narrated in this story. *The cell houses now in use*

were built in 1825, nearly a century ago! Some reforms have been instituted, it is true, and the institution is a bit cleaner than of yore, but everything—the system especially—virtually is the same. The prison always has been an anachronism, a monument to human stupidity, and the apotheosis of graft and of man's inhumanity to man. Nor is the institution in any wise different from many other hell-holes of its official kind that are scattered all over this fair land of ours.

Gray, frowning, cheerless walls, surrounding a still more forbidding and repellent interior, ever have made the unintelligent construction of our prisons a reproach to the men who design them and a disgrace to the authorities who immure within their walls the victims of Society's own sins.

With its workshops, where the sweat of social outcasts was milled into dollars for grafting politicians and greedy contractors; its lock-stepping files that reduced all victims of Society's sins to a common dead level of degradation, and the stripes that cast a bar sinister on the convict's very soul and were a badge of infamy destined to sear on his brain a vivid and agonizing memory of ignominy and shame that time never could efface, Sing Sing, or any other of our state prisons at the time of our narrative, could have furnished a theme for a Dante or a Milton. This virtually applies to most of them today—although some are worse than others.

Over the gates of the inferno fabricated by Italy's greatest imaginative genius, the immortal poet wrote: "Leave all hope behind, all ye who enter here." He who enters one of our prisons and does not leave behind not only hope, but self-respect and health, is either stronger than his fellows in physi-

cal and moral fibre, very fortunate in the matter of "pull," or most optimistic in his faith in political gods.

To a man of good breeding and normal mentality the mere idea of imprisonment is horrifying. To feel that his liberty is gone, and that the free air of heaven, the sunshine and flowers, the green grass, the breeze-kissed foliage of the trees, the sparkle and sheen of waters, and the music of the birds no longer are his to enjoy, is agonizing to any one save the hardened criminal, to whom imprisonment is all in the game, and who naturally is callous to the more esthetically sensuous impressions of the world he has left behind. Give the case-hardened criminal the privilege of taking the gin, the women and the carousals of the underworld with him into prison, and his punishment would be turned into a mere sojourn in a rather uncomfortable resort. For purely business reasons he may be anxious to return to the practice of his profession, but he experiences from his surroundings no sense of humiliation nor shame from which he yearns to escape. His discomfort is purely physical.

The "habitual" has no domestic ties to break, no pride of station to injure, no reputation to shatter and knows no degradation—he is long past that. The opinion of the upperworld is naught to him. His own kind looks upon him as a hero, "down on his luck." At worst, the underworld merely regards him as a fool for getting "collared." If his pride center is hurt in the least, it is because his capture and conviction are a reflection upon his professional skill.

Rarely does the convict raise his head above the emasculating influence of the prison and make a

desperate fight for freedom. He seldom has force of character sufficient to impel him to break jail. What little manhood a man possesses on entering prison soon is stamped out of him by the system. Only occasionally does a strong leader arise who will lead a prison insurrection and attempt a general jail delivery in the face of death, or at the very least, an increased punishment. The convict usually is quickly crushed in spirit—if he ever had any—and drops readily into the dull and featureless life of the prison.

Parkyn temperamentally was an idealist, yet his mind had much of the quality of practicality, inspired by ambition. He loved his profession and had sufficient faith in his talents, powers of industry and perseverance to believe that success in his chosen field eventually was to be his.

To be robbed of the most useful years of his life, the years in which he should be buffeting the world and gathering strength and wisdom—for to such men, time spent in prison is just that much taken out of life—and to lose his fighting chance in the struggle for success, was the refinement of cruelty.

Among the shadows that darkened his mind none was so somber as the thought of his dear mother, who, barely strong enough to endure the horror of his arrest and trial, collapsed into a complete physical wreck when injustice was crowned with the laurel of victory and the dread news of his sentence came to her. He knew that she could not possibly long endure the sorrow and humiliation of his imprisonment, to say nothing of the privations which must result from his inability to aid in her support,

for grief and advancing years necessarily must render her incapable of self-sustenance. And to think that he had been sent to prison for a crime of which he was innocent!

As the train swiftly bore him toward Sing Sing, that burial place of hope, reputation, ambition, self-respect and liberty, these somber thoughts crowded thick and fast upon his brain and drove him to the verge of frenzy. Could he have done so he would have leaped from the train to death or mutilation.

But soon came merciful apathy from sheer exhaustion of nerve force, and he sat for the rest of the journey gazing with dull and unseeing eyes out of the window at the swiftly flying scenery. When he arrived at the penitentiary he was as spiritless as an automaton.

When Robert Parkyn entered the prison to begin the long stretch of years that must elapse before he again would be a free man, he was in a merciful daze that blunted the edge of his sensibilities almost to the point of unconsciousness of his surroundings. He suffered, without a murmur, the usual manipulations to which the newly-arrived convict is subjected. The bath, the hair clipping, the atrocious ill-fitting prison garb—all failed to arouse in him resentment or even a passing interest.

Not until he had been duly numbered and put in his cell, did reaction come, or the young man fully comprehend his situation. Then came a violent ebullition of rage which made him dangerous for the moment. It was well that no human piece of the cruel legal machinery which had immured him was within reach, for number 515, late Robert Parkyn, was ready to act to the very letter the part so un-

justly given him by the law—this with no particular regard to persons, providing the victim of his wrath was an official.

He raged up and down the short length of his cell in aimless fury for a while, and then wildly rushed at the door, throwing himself against the heavy steel bars with such force that he was knocked to the floor, stunned and helpless, with nose bleeding and one of his eyes badly contused.

When he recovered his senses he struggled painfully to a sitting position and saw a stalwart uniformed guard leering at him through the bars of the door and laughing derisively.

"Oh, ho! me bucko. Ye're tryin' the Samson act, are ye? What's the use? A lot o' fellers has tried it, but nobody has pulled down this old temple yet. Better save yer muscle—you'll need it in the stone-yard or the shops before ye get through."

No. 515 glared ominously at the guard, but did not reply.

"Like t' take a good, hard fall out o' me, wouldn't ye, me lad? Well, ye better not try any o' them stunts here. I'd come in an' give ye a chance, only it wouldn't be fair. Ye're a new boarder, an' don't know the ropes yet. But don't throw no more o' them Samson fits. It ain't healthy. We've got a nice lot o' cures fer bad actors. You've got a twenty year stretch ahead o' ye, an' ye better get busy doin' it."

The guard laughed at his own wit, which was lost upon the prisoner, who still was staring blankly at him.

"It's no trouble ter give ye what's comin' to ye, if ye ain't a good boy," continued the guard, good-naturedly; "but, all the same, ye'd better take a tip

from yer uncle. Time off fer good conduct beats the dark cell and bread and water, or gettin' strung up to a door by the thumbs, a hell of a ways. Take a tumble now, if ye know what's good fer yer health," and the guard turned away and strode off down the corridor.

No. 515 sat savagely glaring through the bars for some time. His wits finally cleared and the gleam of ferocity faded from his eyes. Unsteadily rising to his feet he tottered to the bunk nearby and dejectedly sat down on its edge.

Befuddled as he was while the guard was speaking, that official's remarks were not altogether lost upon the prisoner. As his brain cleared he instinctively realized that insubordination would merely serve to justify the verdict passed upon him and increase his punishment. He then and there resolved to so conduct himself in future that he could not be robbed of whatever was his due in the way of time allowance. Incidentally he determined to resist to the utmost the downward drag of his environment. His identity might be lost during his term of imprisonment, but No. 515 should be forever lost and Robert Parkyn come into his own when that time had expired.

And so, to all outward seeming, 515 became a model prisoner. Deep down in his heart there still burned the fire of resentment for his unjust conviction, and his very soul was suffused with gall and wormwood, but no one ever would have suspected that his attitude was not one of quiet resignation to the inevitable.

It was nearly noon when 515 was thrust into his cell. Promptly at the stroke of twelve, the pris-

oners were marched to their cells preparatory to giving them their midday meal.

No. 515 discovered that his cell-mate was a huge, black, aromatic negro—a half-witted, miserable "throw-back," a deaf-mute and a "lifer," who, he subsequently learned, had assaulted and afterward murdered a young white woman in one of the upstate towns.

The discovery of the uncongeniality and odoriferousness of his cell-mate had one redeeming feature; it was likely to reconcile No. 515 to anything in the way of labor that should keep him out of that awful cell.

Let those who believe that men are made better by imprisonment reflect on the dimensions of No. 515's cell in Sing Sing. Seven feet long, six feet eight inches high and three and one-half feet wide! Less than eighty-three cubic feet of dead air space each, for two men, who must share this space with two stools, a slop pail and two immovable bunks, occupying half the width of the cell, so that with his back to the wall the convict had no room for his knees! From five o'clock P. M., to 6 A. M., and from Saturday night till Monday morning they remained immured in this awful hole!

At noon No. 515 was herded into the bread line with the other convicts, who were marched single file past the stations where the "duffers" of bread were distributed, and thence to the bare pine tables with their cheap, meager furnishings, to be served with the thin soup, coarse meat and abominable "coffee" which was to sustain the prisoners for the rest of their day of arduous toil. The new convict could not eat; he went through the form of gulping down several mouthfuls of the nauseous, nondescript fluid that masqueraded as coffee, and at the end of

the meal was marched back with the others and locked in his cell.

His cell-mate soon afterward was marched out with his fellow-convicts to work, but 515 was not assigned to any labor until the following morning, when he received a perfunctory going over from the physician and a deputy warden. The latter seemed especially pleased with the prisoner's robust appearance, and assigned him to work in the stone yard.

The new prisoner soon had occasion to be thankful for his magnificent physique. Day labor is no joke to the man who is not accustomed to it, and while he was a splendid athlete, No. 515, like many another man with a muscular system developed by athletics, found that work in the stone-yard brought muscles into play that never before had been systematically exercised.

Then, too, the monotony of the labor itself was frightfully wearing. In athletics one can vary his muscular movements to suit his own pleasure, or according to the game; not so in hustling and cutting heavy stone. This is a steady grind in which there is no element of play—and play is the special feature of athletics that relieves it of the tedium of mere drudgery.

The uncleanliness of the work was to 515 a new feature of industry—one to which, while he had nothing but respect for honest toil, he had great difficulty in becoming accustomed. His hands, of which he was wont to take particular care, soon lost their well-kept appearance and became as rough and democratic as those of any journeyman stone-worker or mason. As for the bathing facilities in the prison, the less said about them the better.

The worst feature of the treadmill of prison labor

was the brutal silence that was enforced in the yards and shops. To work side by side with men who were compelled to keep more silent than horses or oxen, was actual torture.

To be permitted to write letters only after two months imprisonment, and then only once a month; to see friends only once a month—and then only in the presence of a guard—and to be punished for smiling at a fellow-convict! Surely, under such a benevolent system, only the most hardened criminal could fail of reclamation.

There were times when 515 felt that he must speak, or shout—or go mad. He was deterred from infraction of the rules—which inevitably would have been followed by punishment and black marks against his prison record—only by his fixed policy of earning that precious time allowance that seemed so far away, yet so well worth striving for.

The nights, the terrible, seemingly never-ending nights, were almost unendurable. Alone with his thoughts in his uncomfortable bunk, breathing the stifling, fetid air of his narrow quarters, made still more awful by the exhalations of the body and breath of the half-witted black degenerate who shared his cell, No. 515 could not sleep until nearly daylight, when the bad air and complete exhaustion overcame him and he sank into what was nearer coma than sleep, an unconscious state that had but one redeeming feature—it was dreamless. And then, early in the morning, stupid, still fatigued and listless, he was awakened to begin another round of weary hours of awful, unrequited toil.

Thus the new convict went on, day in and day out, in the dreary round of arduous manual labor in an uncongenial field with still more uncongenial sur-

roundings, rapidly becoming a mere atom in the remorseless maw of the inhuman machinery which slowly, but surely, crushes the manhood—and often the very life—out of its victims.

The dull, gray monotony of the daily toil of even the free laborer, claims its thousands upon thousands of victims—reducing them to mere food for the huge social machine which grinds the many into powder so that the few may live in luxury. What chance has the man who has not even liberty to console him, and whose life-blood slowly is sipped by that greediest of vampires, the prison-contract-labor system.

The steady, merciless grind of the stone-yard, under the eye and the tongue-lash of brutal guards and contract labor foremen, who punctuated with kicks and blows the vile oaths with which they whipped up the flagging energies of the lax-fibered convicts, was awful!

Before entering the penitentiary, many of the prisoners never in all their lives had done a day's work at manual labor. These were men of weak power, whose efficiency was far below the normal—in many almost at the zero point. Nearly all the convicts were men of a low grade of efficiency.

Immediately to plunge such men as these into the hardest kind of labor under the most brutal and exacting of task-masters, labor in the fruits of which they never could participate, was the very refinement of cruelty.

No. 515 was naturally a powerful young man and had all the energy of vigorous youth, yet he felt the grind most keenly, and instinctively pitied the weaker vessels among his companions of the stone-yard gang. He was not surprised when a convict inflicted

deliberate injury upon himself with the object of escaping the cruel trials of the stone-yard.

On one occasion he saw the man who was working beside him, coolly lay one of his fingers upon a block of stone and smash it with a setting maul!

The prisoner was sent to the hospital, where the finger was amputated. He was permitted to remain in the hospital until the part was healed. He then was sent back to the stone-yard.

Within three days the desperate man deliberately smashed another finger, and again was sent to the hospital for repairs—and another amputation! On his recovery he received another dose of the stone-yard.

Still a third time did the poor devil mutilate a finger! While the doctor was dressing the injured member the convict said:

"Say, Doc., what the hell's the use o' makin' me hike back an' forth between here and the stone-yard? I'll furnish you with jobs as long as I have any lunch-hooks left. See? I won't work in that yard, that's what! Better keep me here, Doc."

Doctor Lyford, the prison physician, being a humane man, of ideas at least a little advanced, and withal not lacking in humor, kept the perpetual surgical clinic in the hospital and made an orderly of him.

How many prison officials know why prisoners malinger—pretending sickness though they have it not? Yet how simple it all is.

Thanks to our stupid, penurious, medieval penal system—which is so busy punishing the criminal that it has no money to spend or time to spare in studying him—the ordinary prison official barely can see beyond his nose, much less comprehend the

problems that daily face him. He knows nothing of criminal psychology. Even the average prison physician usually is young and inexperienced, has no heart in his work and no ambition other than to save enough of his meager salary to enable him to get a start in private practice.

When the convict appears on the "sick line" complaining of bogus ailments, how simple the explanation that the poor devil merely is trying to make a nuisance of himself or to evade tasks.

Deep down in the heart of the most hardened criminal is a desire for human sympathy and companionship. He gets this in the hospital. Then, too, he makes up in egotism what he lacks in self-respect. By pretending to be ill, he secures for the time being the center of the stage. How else can we explain the fact that a prisoner will endure almost any discomfort for the privilege of appearing on the sick line? The most nauseous, revolting drugs given for the purpose of curing him of his dishonest pretense of sickness, have no terror for the prison malingerer! As to evading work, despite his weakness of fibre the convict rarely would attempt to evade reasonable labor under proper conditions.

And most convicts take their religion just as they do their medicine. It is a diversion that brings them into the lime-light of individual attention and attracts to them the sympathetic attention of certain illogical folk who proselyte for the gratification of their own egotism and who, in their work in the vineyard of the Lord, pursue sinners as any true sportsman might hunt game.

No reward for his labor, no companionship, no love, no freedom, no converse with his kind—and harsh, brutal treatment! Is it surprising that our

penal system has been a failure—aye, a stench in the nostrils of humanity?

No. 515 scarcely could hope for intervention of any kind. He had no influence whatever in the outside world, and it was from here that aid must come. He soon was completely out of touch with the social system whose victim he was. Halloran had been transferred to a far distant job, and his occasional letters were the only evidence that anyone save his sick mother knew that Robert Parkyn still lived.

Shortly after his incarceration in Sing Sing, the young man received the news that his mother's illness, albeit a lingering one, was destined to prove fatal. This was not unexpected, yet it came to him with a terrific shock, succeeded with an odd combination of mental apathy, alternating with periods of resentment which were the more soul-racking because suppressed. He occasionally had a hazy half-notion that the awful injustice that had been done him sooner or later would be righted in one way or another—it seemed dimly preposterous that this should not be so—only to awaken to a renewed consciousness of the hopelessness of his situation.

The guards had not yet been especially brutal to him—possibly because he was strong, did his tasks well, and for the most part had been docile enough. But prison guards are not averse to making trouble with the best behaved convicts. Often and often the guards at Sing Sing would deliberately aggravate to fury men who performed their tasks without a murmur and showed a capacity for "licking up" work that should have been pleasing to almost any employer, and especially gratifying to the guards

assigned to duty in the shops and yards, who endeavored to get as much work out of the convicts as they could, for the greater profit of the contractors —whose agents, in effect, the guards really were.

Men were cunningly changed about from department to department of the prison—the State carefully avoided teaching the convicts anything that would be useful outside of the prison. For example, convicts were taught to run a machine for cutting shoe soles, but never to make a shoe. The trades taught at Sing Sing and the habits of industry inculcated, would have been quite as useful to a horse.

A good, skillful worker, if allowed to go on peacefully and quietly, was sure of his time allowance. This did not please the contractors, who coined the fatigue and heartaches and the perspiration of the State's slaves into dollars. The interests of the contractors and of the grafters higher up, who turned some of these dollars into bonds printed in the poor devils of prisoners' very blood, must be conserved; that was what Sing Sing was for.

And so, on occasion, good workers were goaded by persecutions until, exasperated beyond human endurance, they committed some infraction of the rules. With each infraction came punishment and time loss, and it was not long before the time allowance for good behavior had been licked up clean by the atrocious system.

Although he had determined to be a model prisoner and to save his time allowance at all hazards, No. 515 finally got upon very thin ice. The contemptible petty jabs and stabs in his pride center, and the profane abuse to which he was daily exposed, finally put his nerves on edge, and he became morose and irritable. That, sooner or later, he

would lose self-control, with an explosion of resentment, would be brutally treated and go the way so many other prisoners had gone, seemed inevitable—and so it would have been, had not an incident occurred which was destined to change the current of his life.

Chapter XV

THE NEW TRUSTY

As Major Donaldson was passing through the stone-yard one morning on his usual rounds of the prison, he noticed a group of convicts engaged in moving into position a particularly heavy slab of granite, preparatory to cutting it, and stopped for a moment to watch them.

Through carelessness, or perhaps inattention due to the knowledge that the warden was watching them, the men who were supporting one side of the stone let it fall squarely upon the leg of one of their number, lacerating it frightfully and pinning him to the ground. The unfortunate fellow gave a sharp cry of pain and fainted dead away, while his companions stood helplessly by, staring dumbly at the victim of their awkwardness.

Instinctively the Major hastened toward the unfortunate prisoner with the intention of directing his extrication from a painful and dangerous predicament. Before he could reach the injured man a convict who was close at hand seized a piece of scantling that was lying near, rushed to the scene of the accident and peremptorily ordering several of the group of men who stood about the stone to assist him in raising the heavy mass, inserted the lever beneath it and elevated it sufficiently to allow the prostrate man's companions to pull him free. The

rescuer then turned the matter over to the guards, who by this time had arrived on the scene. A stretcher was brought and the injured man removed to the hospital.

The warden watched the proceedings with sympathetic interest and, after seeing the poor fellow on his way to the hospital, accosted the convict who had succored his comrade.

"That was well done, my man," he remarked, warmly; "you have great presence of mind."

The prisoner touched his cap.

"It was nothing, sir," he modestly replied; "the other men probably would have thought of the same thing themselves if they had not been so shocked and surprised by the accident."

The warden looked narrowly at the convict, noting with interest the man's refinement of language and manner.

"But, all the same, they *didn't* think of it, and you did. It was good work, my man—good work!"

Mentally noting the convict's number, the kindly old Major passed on, following the stretcher to the hospital to learn the extent of the prisoner's injuries and see that he received proper attention.

As the injured man was a "lifer" and never again could be compelled to work, he was the envied of all observers when he was convalescent and began to stump around on the wooden leg with which the state so generously had provided him. The prevalent convict sentiment was; "Ain't he the lucky guy?"

A few days later Major Donaldson instructed his secretary to inform Deputy Warden McCabe that he wished to have No. 515 taken out of the stone-

yard gang and assigned as a trusty to duty at the warden's office, as messenger and general helper.

The stone-yard having become intolerable, No. 515 received his appointment as trusty with great joy and appreciation of the privilege conferred upon him.

With the native political shrewdness of his race, tempered by long official experience, McCabe climbed into the band-wagon and gave 515 a new cell-mate in the person of a clever counterfeiter, who was boarding at Sing Sing at the expense of the United States Government.

This man instinctively was a gentleman, and undeniably an artist, "gone wrong." He had been an employe of a bond engraving house, where he had learned too much—for his own good. He had found the art of deception by his pen very fascinating, and had done one of the cleverest bits of counterfeiting that ever had come under the notice of the government. His crime consisted of counterfeiting with a pen, a single one hundred dollar bill!

Strange to say, it was not cupidity that caused the downfall of No. 1028. By working at his regular profession at the high salary paid such artists, the counterfeiter could have earned in the time consumed in making the counterfeit, three times the amount represented by the figure on the note! The bill was a beautiful specimen of pen-work, and as an artistic production alone, was well worth its counterfeit value.

A few of the better informed may understand that this man's crime was due to his artistic ideals. He was so confident of his skill and so proud of his talent that he could not be content with anything

less than deceiving Uncle Sam by a magnificent piece of art work.

The work did not quite deceive the government experts as to its genuineness, but they missed its underlying motive—as did numerous others, who knew more of money and the law of the land than of the artistic temperament which so enjoys "putting one over" on those whose business it is not to be fooled.

When the Chief of the United States Secret Service laid hands on the above mentioned work of art, he was amazed at the fidelity and beauty of the drawing. Discovering on close inspection that the bogus one hundred dollar note had been made with pen and ink, every stroke of which represented the highest priced art in the profession of engraving, the chief exclaimed:

"Well, I'll be damned! Was there ever such a fool on God's green earth?"

The chief himself had "temperament" and knew a thing of beauty when he saw it. As he committed the bill to the flames he sighed, "What a pity!" and as the beautiful creation curled and crackled and was consumed he said, with a puzzled air, "I can't understand it."

Of course he couldn't understand it. And yet it was so simple. A true work of art is a work of love, and counterfeiting is not the only crime that has been committed for the love of art for art's sake; nor was No. 1028 the only artist who ever has been immured within prison walls for serving his art better than he served Society.

Crime, after all, merely is misapplied energy. It sometimes is misdirected genius—the genius of art, science, invention or finance.

And so, kind sirs, sweet charity, or, what is much the same thing, a better understanding—and a better "system."

No. 515 found his new cell-mate "breathable," thereby differing from the unwholesome atmosphere created by the ebon-hued Senegambian with whom he previously had shared his narrow quarters.

No. 1028 also was congenial. He had enjoyed a fine education, much worldly experience, and was artistic to his finger tips. Moreover, he could whisper most entertainingly and discreetly, sustaining his end of a conversation almost under the very noses of the guards.

After No. 515 himself had mastered the difficult art of conversation under his breath, the two men beguiled both the time and the guards.

Like 515, No. 1028 also had ideals.

Ideals in a prison? Yes, of course—chiefly among the prisoners, it must be admitted, but, to give the system its due, they sometimes are found even among the officials.

Now and then there is a convict or an official who takes ideals into prison with him and escapes the dead-level pressure from above and the dead-level pull from below that would force the one into the common criminal mould of helplessness, dull despair and moral and mental anesthesia, and the other into the common official trend of callous indifference, besotted ignorance and merciless inhumanity.

There was but one limitation to the range of subjects discussed by our two convict "numbers." The subject of murder and murderers was studiously avoided.

No. 515 had told his story to his new cell-mate

early in the course of their acquaintance, and had received a shock that cured him of all disposition to again unfold the tale of his martyrdom. No. 1028 listened very attentively, with a politeness which a Chesterfield might have envied, but it was evident to 515 that his artistic companion did not believe his story.

The elaborate care with which 1028 thereafter avoided all reference to the particular form of crime for which his cell-mate had been unjustly imprisoned, was most exasperating to the latter, but there was nothing to do save to endure it as philosophically as he could. Then, too, on sober second thought, No. 515 could not logically blame his partner in misery, whose attitude was that of everybody else in the prison world and could be supported by the official records, should any doubt arise.

After he had got his bearings, the only thing that really hurt No. 515 was the intuitive knowledge that the counterfeiter considered himself to be built of clay superior to his "bunky." Being an artist and unashamed of his own work—for he claimed that he had been sentenced merely because those ineffable asses, the government officials, could not appreciate the most wonderful and beautiful work of art ever penned—No. 1028 had rather definite ideas of his own regarding murderers.

The counterfeiter did, however, rather grudgingly admit that certain carefully selected murderers were in a class immediately below his own profession in the criminal social scale. Primarily, this was not because he was biased in favor of his cell-mate, but because he was a wise observer. He had a profound contempt for dips, burglars and night-prowlers of their kin, sneak-thieves and lush workers. Yeggmen

he might have recognized as heroes—there was hazard in the "soup" and much danger in "cracking the box" and making a "get-away"—were it not that their heroics began and ended in theft—ordinary, vulgar theft.

"Caste" among criminals? Certainly: The yeggman looks down upon the ordinary burglar; they both despise the pickpocket, and both are despised by the "stick-up" man; the shoplifter views with contempt the female abortionist—and so on all along the line. Murder brings the professional criminal into the heroic ranks of the gun-men—and who in gangland carries his head higher?

And why should one marvel at this? Are not all professions lacking in the sense of humor?

Taken by and large, the accident that happened in the stone-yard, although it cost the poor fellow who sustained it the loss of his leg, was a Godsend to him and to No. 515—especially to the latter. His duties as a trusty were light, and while the mere fact that he *was* a trusty made him unpopular with the other convicts—for among inmates in prisons, "trusty" ever was synonymous with "snitch"—he found his new position at least endurable.

Best of all was the opportunity afforded him for reading and study. On several occasions he had the opportunity to make himself useful to the prison chaplain, who had charge of the library. The reverend gentleman took a fancy to him and arranged matters with the warden so that the trusty could spend considerable time among the books.

No. 515 was an ardent book-lover, and the library being stocked with a fairly well selected assortment of volumes on every conceivable topic, life now was

as comfortable as it could have been made in prison, and, inasmuch as day by day he was adding to his store of knowledge, he did not feel that his time was entirely wasted.

The chaplain was a sincere, kindly, dear old man, who would have done a great work among the prisoners, had he thrown a little less responsibility upon the soul and more upon the body. With rare judgment he felt that it was of little use to labor for the conversion of 515. The clergyman had common sense sufficient to know that the beneficences of God do not loom large upon the horizon of a free-thinker confined in prison for a crime which he claimed he did not commit. As for the argument that the prisoner's woes were designed by the Almighty as a punishment for his untheologic bias, the chaplain was too wise to advance it, even if he himself believed it, which he most emphatically did not.

As the new trusty responded to the influence of his more congenial environment, his mind became less apathetic and, although without influential friends to intercede for him or the development of any feature of his case which would suggest that it might be re-opened, he began to hope that something would happen which would clear his name and give him his liberty. Such is the elasticity of youth! And all because he had been placed in a position where he was treated as if he were half-way human and not, as he had been for more than half a year, a mere bipedal brute, toiling without fee or reward for cruel masters!

Victim of cruel circumstances though he was; enmeshed in the toils of inexorable social custom; immured within the grim and unfeeling walls of a prison; the companion of Society's dregs and offscour-

ings; a social pariah with the primeval brand of Cain upon him; scorned and rejected of men; friendless, alone, and apparently abandoned by fate, No. 515 now was willing to believe that, somehow, somewhere, sometime, his sun must shine again, and the moon and stars shed their silvery beams upon the world that now was but a monster shape of dense and awful gloom.

How fortunate it was for human kind that, when Pandora broke that marvellous box, hope was not spilled along with the rest of the stuff.

Chapter XVI

BEARDING A HOBBYIST IN HIS LAIR

It was a balmy morning in April. The warden's secretary, Howard Duryea, an alert, competent young man whom Major Donaldson had brought with him from Ithaca, his own home town, was busily engaged in putting the office in order in anticipation of the appearance of his chief, whom he momentarily expected.

From time to time he interrupted his task and glanced out of one of the large windows which opened directly upon a stone-flagged courtyard, enclosed upon the side toward the river by the main wall of the prison. The view from the window was a beautiful one, although marred by numerous sordid details peculiar to prisons.

The warden's office was elevated sufficiently to enable Duryea to look over and beyond the massive, gray, forbidding stone wall at the Hudson, which was sparkling and shimmering in the sunlight like a stream of molten silver. Beyond the river he saw the beautiful verdure-bedecked Catskills, above which floated huge banks of cumulus and long soft fleeces of cirrhus clouds that resembled masses of carded wool. At the base of the mountains lay the morning mist, which was slowly rising and dissipating before the warm rays of the sun. Through the mist could be seen the spectral picturesque shapes of several windmills on farms on the opposite shore.

Just above the river, keeping a keen lookout for the breakfast which the stream never failed to supply them, soared a flock of snowy-breasted gulls.

Now and again a pleasure yacht, with white sails full set and bellying in the soft morning breeze, swept by. Occasionally there appeared in the distance a bevy of small sailboats, looking for all the world like a lot of chips propelled by white handkerchiefs for sails. An occasional skiff, containing merry girls and their swains, toiled along, impelled by willing arms and more or less skilfully handled oars. Several large excursion steamers, with bands playing popular music, puffed by, loaded with joyous, mirthful pleasure-seekers bound down stream.

"Heigho!" sighed Duryea, "This is the sort of morning that makes a man feel too strong to work. Those boats certainly look good to me, especially those steamers bound for little old New York."

The young man was brought back to earth by the sight of a uniformed, somber, cartridge-belted sentry, who stepped out of the sentry-box that stood on the top at the corner of the wall. Leaning on his loaded rifle, the guard gazed out over the river as if he too, had a longing for nature or, what was more likely, for some of the devil's inventions devised by that good little gentleman in black with the assistance of man, for the malevolent purpose of keeping a poor prison sentry from devoting his entire attention to duty.

The secretary noted also, that in order to view the scene which had so strongly attracted him, he himself unconsciously had drawn near the window and was peering out through the unesthetic lattice of steel with which it was guarded.

"Humph!" he exclaimed facetiously, "in the midst of life we are in the pen! A fellow can't even get a rubber at nature or a glimpse of freedom that isn't filtered through a gridiron. The Lord help those poor striped devils that can't get out after hours!"

He glanced at the clock.

"Great Scott! look at the time. The Major'll be here in a minute, and if he ever catches me lying down on the job—well, he'll have me court-martialed and shot at sunrise, or cashiered, or reduced to the ranks, or whatever punishment fits the crime—in the army!"

The young man smiled indulgently as he recalled the warden's pet notions of discipline, then completing his task of putting things into shape, seated himself at his own diminutive desk and began scribbling away at some correspondence.

Granting that one did not look at the iron-barred doors and the steel lattice of the windows, the interior of the warden's office at Sing Sing was pleasantly suggestive of the sanctum of an up-to-date business man of the outer world. On one side of the room stood a huge flat-topped, mahogany library table-desk, heaped with a miscellaneous array of books and papers, a large letter press and files, and other ordinary office "junk."

A comfortable, swivel office chair at one side and a huge leather upholstered easy chair at one end of the desk, with a number of smaller mahogany chairs, completed the furniture of the room. The walls were hung with a rich and tasty paper, and on the floor were several luxurious rugs of cheerful design. On the wall, just behind the desk, hung a couple of fine specimens of Old Glory and a pair of crossed business-like cavalry sabers.

As the young secretary often had remarked, the

warden's office was "not half bad, considering its location and street number."

Around the room, against the walls, stood the "morgue"—cases of filing cabinets containing the prisoners' records, descriptions, measurements and "mugs," hundreds and hundreds of them. The Bertillon system was not yet in vogue, hence these records were very crude and incomplete compared with those of today.

Duryea finished his letters and clasping his hands behind his head leaned back lazily in his chair. Glancing at the calendar on the wall, he sprang to his feet and remarked aloud:

"By Jove! I almost forgot. It's visitor's day. That means interruptions all day long, and double work tomorrow to catch up. There's work enough ahead for ten men at that. It's the first day of the month, too!"

"Hello, there, Kid!" interrupted a voice from the door—"What's eatin' ye?"

Duryea turned toward the speaker and discovered Deputy Warden McCabe, who had entered just in time to hear a portion of the secretary's soliloquy.

The young man straightened up with mock dignity and gave a military salute.

"Sir?" he exclaimed.

"Beg pardon, Mr. Duryea, I forgot." McCabe grinned broadly as he answered the salute.

"That's better, sir," commented Duryea, pompously, and they both laughed heartily.

"Good mornin', Howard."

"Good morning, Mac."

"Now that we're properly introduced," inquired McCabe, "what *was* the particular beef ye was makin' when I broke in on ye?"

"Oh, I was kicking about visitor's day. It's a con-

founded nuisance! I wish the Major would either close the office on visitor's day and let us all go fishing, or lock the door and keep everybody out except the people who have business here—and it wouldn't hurt to enforce the lock-out on some of *them.*"

"Well," said McCabe sententiously, "there may be a difference of opinion about the nuisance. Some o' the guests o' this old tavern might not agree with ye."

"That's right, Mac," replied the secretary, apologetically, "but one doesn't always think about the other fellow."

McCabe noticed the empty chair at the desk.

"Where's the Major, Howard?"

"Don't know." The secretary glanced at the clock. "He should be here by now. Maybe he's trying to dodge visitor's day."

"To be real honest with ye," grinned McCabe, "I wouldn't blame the old man much. It's one o' the days when I'm glad I ain't boss o' the works."

"Hope the Major is better natured today, Mac. He had a grouch on yesterday that was something fierce."

"What was he peeved at?" inquired McCabe with a forced effort to appear innocently disinterested.

"As if you didn't know as well as I do!" retorted Duryea indignantly. "You know blamed well what ails the Major. He's still as sore as a boil about that poor cuss that Gleason shot the other day."

"Sure, I know," admitted McCabe, gloomily, "but where the devil do we get off? If one o' these blamed birds makes his get-away, we catch hell! If we pot him, we catch hell—an' get in Dutch all around. We're damned if we do, an' damned if we

don't. What's a feller to do? Good jobs are mighty scarce these days."

"Yes, Mac," chaffed the secretary, "soft snaps *are* scarce and you've held yours only twenty years, eh? Poor old chap! It's when a fellow gets too strong for real work that he makes a holler about good jobs being hard to get."

"Well, you've got some soft snap, yerself, if anybody asks ye," sneered McCabe. "People in glass houses better not practice with sling-shots."

"Oh, I don't know! Perhaps I *have* got a soft snap. But say, McCabe, I often wish I were a big, husky brute like you."

"Prize ring, eh?" grinned McCabe.

"Almost anything—but a man-herder," blazed Duryea.

"Good shot!" chuckled McCabe. "The old man knew what he was doin' when he hired you. Chicken heart met yellow kid that day."

"Say, Mac, I wonder how the Major would like to hear that?"

"He'd be pretty hot, I reckon," replied McCabe, "but he's not goin' to hear it and," he added significantly, "you'll not tell him, either. See?"

Duryea looked the chief deputy in the eye for a moment and replied, "That's a bet!—but not because I'm afraid. Don't you forget that."

McCabe satirically eyed the young man from head to foot, and working his arms in imitation of the flapping of a rooster's wings cried, "Cock a doodle doo!"

"Yes," retorted Durea, angrily, "'Cock a doodle doo!'—but I'm the old blue hen's chicken, and he's got gaffs to back up his crow with. Just put that in your memory book—and mark the page."

"Oh, come off, Kid!" exclaimed McCabe, good naturedly; "let's cut out the rough stuff. It's no use chewin' the rag and tryin' to take a fall out o' each other. We can't either of us find a place to get off, if we begin that."

"All right, Mac, we'll let it go at that," growled Duryea, "but be careful how you slam the Major. I'm mighty strong for him."

"So am I, Kid, for the matter o' that. I didn't really mean to knock him. He's a dead game old sport, even if he *is* a bit daffy on some things—an' I like him. You see, Howard, it's this way: I've been on one job or another in this dump for twenty years, as you said—started at the bottom and worked up. Had a good pull an' they couldn't can me. See? I've seen a lot o' stunts pulled off, my boy, under the old system, an' the Major's new-fangled notions jar me; that's all. P'raps it's because it's hard for an old dog to learn new tricks."

"Even good ones, eh?" laughed Duryea, laying his hand in friendly fashion on the deputy warden's arm. "What's the matter with the Major's new-fangled notions, Mac? What is it that jars you?"

"Oh, hell!" blurted McCabe, "he's spoilin' the prisoners! They're gettin' so cocky that there's no livin' with 'em. Why, they're beginnin' to think they're all nice little gentlemen."

"Oh, I see," retorted Duryea, ironically; "the guards can't stand that sort of competition. The line between guards and guarded musn't be too sharply drawn, eh?"

"Oh, cut it out, Kid! You know what I mean."

"Hey! Close up there, you damned scuts!" cried an angry voice just outside the window.

The two men looked out into the prison yard and

saw a long file of convicts lock-stepping past under the charge of several guards.

"Yes," replied Duryea, quietly, "I know what you mean—better than you do. He's trying to teach the prisoners self-respect, while you," and he pointed to the somber file of convicts who still were shuffling by, "you prefer that striped, crawling human centipede, as the Major calls it, a blot upon the fair face of civilization, that poisons and kills the manhood and self-respect of every man that gets into it. Look at those faces! All look alike, don't they? Cringing, ashamed, leaden—hopeless! Just as the Major says—cut your hair and mine, stick us into stripes and put us into that shuffling gang of crushed humanity, and we'd be just like the other joints of that awful beast."

"Well, what the devil are you goin' to do with 'em?"

"Ask the warden," answered Duryea, quietly.

"Ask the warden!" protested McCabe. "I know just what I'd get. He'd give me a lecture on ventilation an' whitewash, good food an' soap an' water, mental development an' gymnasiums, military discipline an' the milk o' human kindness. A hell of a combination, that! Bah! Prisoners are prisoners —the scum o' the earth, that's what!"

"Some are, not all," contradicted Duryea. "Anyhow, who's to blame? Major Donaldson says that Society is responsible for its own scum and its own dregs, and that the difference between the two is that the scum has money and education, and a chance for itself, and the dregs never had any of those things."

"Huh! 'Me an' the Major,' eh?" grunted McCabe, obstinately. "Even if he was right, the preachin'

game wouldn't help any—not so you could notice it."

"The Major never preaches!" returned Duryea, testily. "He leaves that to the chaplain and priest. He says, get their blood right and their brains right first—then let the preachers do their damnedest."

McCabe shrugged his shoulders and said something under his breath, but made no audible comment.

"The trouble is, Mac," continued the young disciple of the new idea, loftily, "that the Major is several thousand years ahead of you and those other rough-necks—those cave-men in uniform," and he nodded in the general direction of the deputy warden's and guards' quarters.

"I don't know much about cave-men," said McCabe, doubtfully, "but I do know that between the sky pilots, the old hen social reformers, and an old-soldier warden full o' hobbies, us old-timers are likely to have a hell of a time with the prisoners—an' no pitch hot. That's a livin' cinch."

"Well," asked Duryea, with a twinkle of amused anticipation in his eye, "what would *you* do about it, old man?"

"What would *I* do about it? Hell! that's dead easy, son. I'd do just what we did before we took the Major on. The butt of a six-shooter can outtalk the warden an' out-preach the preacher. It takes the solitary an' about a week o' bread an' water eats ter get a prisoner in a prayerful frame o' mind, and," McCabe continued, earnestly, "you've no idea how easy it is ter reason with a feller that's strung up by the thumbs."

"Oh, wake up, McCabe!" exclaimed Duryea, wearily; "you make me tired."

"Wake up, nothin'! I wish ter God I *was* only dreamin' bad dreams. The hope o' wakin' up is the best I'll ever get while the Major's holdin' down that chair yonder—unless *he* wakes up—an' I don't guess he will."

A step was heard in the hall.

"S—sh!" whispered the secretary, warningly; "here he comes now!"

McCabe stood at attention, whilst Duryea busied himself arranging the books and papers on the warden's desk.

Major Donaldson bustled in, and pausing just within the door stood erect in all his martial dignity, as stiff as though he were on parade, expectantly surveying his secretary and the chief deputy.

Duryea followed McCabe's example and came to attention. Both men clicked their heels together and brought their right hands up in formal military salute.

The Major returned the salute and greeted them ceremoniously.

"Good morning, Mr. McCabe.—Good morning, Mr. Duryea."

"Good morning, sir," replied both men in chorus.

The Major seated himself at his desk and said, with great impressiveness:

"Permit me to say, gentlemen, that the manner in which you just now received me shows great improvement. I really believe I shall succeed in making soldiers of you, after all. Raise your chin just a trifle higher, Mr. McCabe—and throw your shoulders back just a shade more, Mr. Duryea."

"Yes, sir," replied McCabe respectfully, tilting up his chin.

"Thank you, sir," said the secretary, throwing

back his shoulders and protruding his chest like a pouter pigeon.

"That's better," commented the Major, evidently pleased.

The two students of etiquette and carriage militant, remaining at attention, winked and smiled at each other surreptitiously while the Major was pottering with some papers in a drawer of his desk.

The warden closed the drawer with a snap, turned toward the chief deputy and asked abruptly, but with a solicitude which his *brusquerie* ill concealed:

"How's the good wife, this morning, McCabe—and that wonderful twelve-pound boy?"

"Both doin' well, sir, thank you."

"Give Mrs. McCabe my congratulations and regards, and tell her to move herself and that youngster out of jail into the country, as soon as the doctor will give her a ticket of leave. I'll parole the boy."

"Yes, sir," replied McCabe, soberly; "that'll please her—and tickle the boy most to death."

The warden turned to his secretary.

"How's the pleurisy, Howard?"

"I'm so much better, sir," Duryea answered, merrily, "that Dr. Lyford says I'm a malingerer. He threatened to have me locked up on a bread and water diet."

"What! Lyford said that? Quite out of date, sir—quite out of date! And very ineffective. Why—" The Major suddenly noted the by-play of grins and winks between McCabe and Duryea.

"Eh? What the deuce—Ah, yes, I see, the doctor will have his little joke."

"Any orders, sir?" inquired McCabe.

"Nothing, except that I want the prisoners in

chapel at half-past seven this evening. I am going to give them a talk."

"Yes, sir."

The chief deputy saluted and left the office. As he passed the secretary on his way out, he muttered in that gentleman's ear: "Say, Kid, I'll have a hunk o' frosted cake with plums in it, an' a bunch o' hot-house violets ready for each o' them striped-backed gents at tonight's reception."

McCabe paused at the door just long enough to exchange grins with Duryea and then disappeared.

"Mr. Duryea," said the warden, "kindly ask Dr. Lyford to come to the office."

The secretary went to the speaking tube, called the surgeon, informed him that the warden would like to see him, and returned to his work. A moment later the doctor entered, and, saluting the warden, quietly awaited his pleasure.

"Good morning, Doctor, how is No. 700?"

"He is doing finely, sir. The ball did not penetrate the skull, as I at first thought. It flattened on the bone, passed around the head beneath the scalp and lodged just below the occiput. I extracted it very easily. Here it is, sir, much the worse for wear," and he handed the ball to the warden.

Major Donaldson examined the missile with the eye of a connoisseur.

"Humph! Pretty well knocked out of shape, isn't it, Doctor? It's no wonder that it does so little good to preach to criminals."

Ah!" laughed the doctor, "but they are not all like that, sir. I posted one the other day who had a skull like a paper-shell almond."

"Well, Doctor, I suppose it makes very little difference whether a convict's head is so thick that

you can't beat any sense into it with a club, or so thin that what little he has leaks out. It's all the same in the long run. Criminals are not built right, any way you take them."

"Very true, sir."

Dr. Lyford caught a quizzical glance from the secretary's eye and suppressed a smile.

"I'm mighty glad that man is going to pull through, Doctor," continued the Major. "How are the rest of the patients?"

"They all are doing well, sir, thank you."

"Have you had any trouble in getting the extra diet?"

"None whatever, sir."

"Glad to hear it. If things don't go to suit you, report to me at once. The hospital first, every time."

"Thank you. Anything more, sir?"

"Nothing," said the warden, saluting the surgeon to indicate that the interview was ended.

Major Donaldson returned to his official papers, grumbling aloud to himself.

"I suppose we'll have the usual crowd of curiosity-seekers today. It wouldn't be so bad if there weren't so many who demand the warden's personal attention. Well," he growled, "they'll get short shrift. It's the first day of the month, and business is business. Oh, by the way, Mr. Duryea," he called to his secretary, who had been amusedly listening to his grumbling, "Ask Mr. McCabe to order Gleason to report to me at once."

The secretary obeyed, via the speaking tube, then, turning to the warden, quietly asked, "Shall I leave the room, sir?"

"By no means. Remain at your desk—and incidentally take notes of the conversation."

A moment later a burly, uniformed, hard-looking fellow of some forty years of age slouched in and stood doggedly expectant.

The warden coolly surveyed the guard for a moment and then said, explosively; "Well!"

"W—why, you s—sent for me, sir," stammered the guard.

"Well sir!" thundered the Major.

Suddenly recollecting, the guard saluted in a surly fashion.

"Beg your pardon, sir, I didn't think."

"That's better, sir," returned the Major, somewhat mollified.

He looked at Gleason steadily for a moment.

"I suppose you have heard, Gleason, that the man you shot is going to pull through?"

"Yes, sir."

"That ought to relieve your conscience, if you have any. Let me tell you something, Gleason," the warden continued sternly, "I've looked up your record in this institution, and I find that you hold the diamond belt for brutality and gun-play—and you've been here only three years, at that. Take my advice; be mighty careful hereafter with that cannon of yours."

"Well," asked Gleason, doggedly, with just a shade of impudence in his manner, "what d'ye expect us to do—let 'em get away?"

Major Donaldson rose from his chair with a snap of his entire six feet, and replied, sharply; "I expect you to do your duty, my man,—nothing more."

"What d' ye call my duty, sir?"

"You know your duty, Gleason!" thundered the Major. "It is not necessary to rehearse it. And there's something else, my friend, that you'd best remember: Sing Sing prison is no place to settle either political debts or personal grudges."

"I—I don't understand, sir."

"Oh, yes you do," and by way of emphasis, the warden struck the desk a resounding whack with a bundle of papers he held in his hand. "You've been persecuting that man ever since he entered the prison—chiefly because, when he was free, he was too active on the wrong side of the political fence.

"And what's more," pursued the Major, with rising anger, "you had a little account to settle with him for certain parties in New York City. That prisoner knows too much to suit you and your friends, Gleason. I'm morally certain that you laid a trap for him—made it look easy, let him get away, and then shot him. One more break on your part and I'll break *you.*"

"B— but sir, — I —"

"That will do, my man! Good morning," and the warden resumed his chair and his work.

Gleason scowlingly slouched toward the door.

An afterthought occurred to the Major, and he called after the guard; "Oh, by the way, Gleason."

The guard stopped and turned toward the chief.

"Prisoners," said the Major, with impressive deliberation, "sometimes have long memories—and most of them finally get out of jail. Cassidy, you will remember, was pretty mean to several of them. Like you, he probably had some little debts to pay. He went away on leave one night and didn't get

back. You know what happened. He was found next morning down by the river, with his brains beaten out! I suspect you can guess who did it. Think it over, my friend."

Gleason did not reply, but when he reached the outer hall where he could not be seen, he stopped long enough to shake his fist in the warden's direction and express his opinion of that official.

"You'll break *me,* will you, you big stiff? If you stick yer damned nose into other people's business too much, Bull Hennessy'll break *you,* quicker'n a monkey can take his hat off!"

"A bad lot, that fellow," commented the Major, "and there are others in this institution who are on the wrong side of the bars. I'm bucking against a rotten and vicious system, my boy, and I don't know who is going to win. I sometimes fear I'll lose out—the fellow who tries to over-throw time-honored evils usually does lose out."

The Major sighed and looked thoughtfully out of the window at the sentry who, with rifle on shoulder, was marching past, and beyond him at the mountains and the blue sky-line above their peaks.

"Yes, Major!" exclaimed the secretary, with the enthusiasm and rosy optimism of youth; "but his principles will live, if they are right. Remember John Brown, sir."

"Thanks for the encouragement, Howard, I was thinking of him," replied the Major with grim humor. "And I remember the song, too. But, my young friend, I am not a fanatic. When poor old Ossawottamie Brown felt that cruel rope around his neck, he probably derived some comfort out of his dream of abolition, but I can't see where the

fun came in. Judging by the way a tight collar annoys me," he laughed, "I don't believe that I'm the sort of stuff of which martyrs are made. I'm a pretty good soldier, my boy, but I'm just human enough to want to accomplish results in the here and now—results I can live to see." The Major again turned to his desk.

A convict in the garb of a trusty, with an envelope in his hand, entered and stood awaiting the warden's notice.

Major Donaldson looked up from his papers and said, kindly; "Well, my man?"

The man saluted and approaching the desk handed the note to the warden.

"From Mr. McCabe, sir," he explained, respectfully.

The Major read the note and laying it on his desk, said; "Tell Mr. McCabe that I'll take the matter up with him later."

The prisoner saluted, "about faced" in military fashion and departed on his mission.

"What do you make of that fellow, Howard?" asked the warden.

"Why, he seems to be a misfit, somehow, sir."

"The same idea has occurred to me. That's why I took him out of the stone-yard and made a trusty of him. He certainly was a misfit breaking rocks. He's a husky chap, at that. What's his record?"

The secretary went to the "morgue," opened a drawer, and after a brief search, took from it a card.

"Here it is, sir—No. 515. Been in prison six months. Serving a twenty-year term for manslaughter."

"Oh, I see. Ever notice, Howard, that on the av-

erage, the man-killers are the most genteel and best-behaved prisoners we have?"

"Yes, sir, and I'll confess that it puzzles me."

"The answer is easy, my boy. The law says that the murderer is a criminal, but nine times out of ten he isn't. He's just plain human, that's all, and his primitive emotions have overcome him. We're all savages under the skin. Humph!" he ejaculated, "there never was a real man with red corpuscles in his blood, that didn't have the germ of murder in his system. We have to have a war now and then, to get it out of us. That's why I don't believe that we'll ever have world-wide, enduring peace."

Duryea listened with startled, wide-eyed interest, drinking in every amazing syllable.

The Major went on, reminiscently:

"Why, I've known men to slip ball cartridges in among the blanks and fire them at their comrades in a sham battle! And still," he continued, thoughtfully; "there are mighty few man-killers who are not sorry that they did the killing. Murder is not a profession nowadays, excepting with the law and with governments. Most murderers have the making of good citizens in them. The insane ones and the crooks who kill in the way of business necessity perhaps are the only exceptions."

The problem was too deep for Duryea to digest immediately. He made no reply other than to remark, as he replaced the record and closed the drawer, "Well, anyway, that man was a gentleman at home, I dare say."

"Do you know any of the particulars of his case, Howard?"

"Y—yes, sir," answered Duryea, with some embarrassment. "You see, sir, I—well, I was inter-

ested in him and I—I got him to talking and—Well, I suppose it was hardly according to regulations but—"

"Eh?" interrupted the warden, brusquely, putting his hand to his ear in a pretended effort to hear better. "I don't hear you. I'm deaf in this ear. Never mind the regulations—but don't do it again. Well?"

"He's that man Parkyn, sir, who was convicted of killing a laborer on the New York Central during the big railroad strike."

"So, that's Parkyn, eh?" mused the warden.

"Yes, sir," enthused Duryea. "He's a Harvard man, sir! and the greatest half-back that ever—"

"That ever made the wrong goal," interrupted the Major dryly, "I recall the case now. It was an odd one, and there were some things about it that looked a bit queer."

"He says he's innocent, sir."

"Indeed? Well, I've heard that before, many, many times. And not all of them lied. But, my boy, the trial's over, the court's adjourned—and Sing Sing isn't a good place for a come-back. More's the pity, sometimes."

The Major paused to look at a file of convicts under guard that was crawling by the window at a snail's pace, to the usual dismal accompaniment of the "shuffle" that never is heard outside of prisons.

"Do you see that, Howard? When they are trimmed alike, dressed alike, and put into that chain —that endless chain of misery which girdles and disgraces the world—under a brutal guard or two, nothing short of omniscience ever could separate the

tares from the wheat. And that very gang contains both."

The Major sighed and picking up some formidable looking documents from the desk, said; "Mr. Duryea, I believe I'll escape while I have the chance, and leave you to run the office for a while. I should like to finish my report, but I doubt my ability to do it here."

"I'll do the best I can, sir, but I don't know what I shall do with the star visitors. I'm not a high-grade entertainer."

"Oh, I'm not quite inhuman, Howard," laughed the warden. "I'll return and defend you as soon as I have finished my report. There probably will not be many visitors until afternoon, anyway." He glanced at the clock. "I'll be back by eleven, I think."

Duryea breathed a deep sigh of relief.

"You've saved my life, sir!" he said, with sincere gratitude.

The Major laughed heartily at Duryea's thankfulness at escaping what the young man evidently considered a severe ordeal, and started for the door.

As he entered the hall he bumped squarely into the prison matron, a stout, white-capped, motherly middle-aged woman, who was just about to turn into the door of the office! In her hand she carried a large sheet of closely written paper.

The impact of the two rather corpulent figures was distinctly demoralizing to both. They grunted in unison and stood for several seconds gasping like a couple of fishes just landed.

Duryea took in the comical situation with an appreciation which was none the less keen when he

recalled his chief's rigid ideas of military etiquette. He chuckled to himself behind his hand.

" 'Raise the hand just a trifle higher, Mr. McCabe, and throw your shoulders back just a shade more, Mr. Duryea.' "

"Ah! What the dev—! I beg your pardon! Good morning, Mrs. Morgan!" sputtered the warden, as soon as he had caught his breath.

The matron laughed almost hysterically, instantly apologizing:

"You really must excuse me, sir, I—I can't help laughing. It was so—so funny!"

The Major was all dignity at once.

"I congratulate you on your keen sense of humor, madam," he said stiffly. Having contributed to the gayety of nations—and of Mrs. Morgan—he continued, frigidly, "what else can I do for you?"

The matron was sobered at once.

"It is the diet list, sir. Will you please sign it?"

The Major returned to his desk, glanced rapidly at the columns of items, signed the paper and dismissed the matron. As he again started for the door, he slyly looked out of the corner of his eye in Duryea's direction. That discreet and valuable person was standing by the window, apparently gazing off into the ethereal western blue on which were limned the hazy outlines of the distant mountains.

Chapter XVII

A REVELATION AND A CALLER WHO GETS CALLED

After the Major had left the office, his secretary worked at the prison records very diligently for some time, accomplishing a prodigious amount of work. Finishing everything in sight, he went to his favorite place at the window and stood for a while, dreamily gazing riverward and breathing in great quantities of the invigorating air.

"Heigho!" he yawned; "this surely is one of the mornings when a fellow feels like joining the Royal Order of the Sons of Rest. I'll bet I've got spring fever. Wonder if the warden would mind if I played hookey for a little while." He looked at the clock and noted the time.

"Probably not," he grinned, "if he doesn't catch me at it, and I'll be back on the job before *he* is, believe me." His conscience gave him a slight jab and he muttered: "There's nothing doing anyway —everything's cleaned up—and I'll get a trusty to watch the office. If any visitors come they'll be tickled to death with him."

The secretary snickered as he thought of the fool questions the poor trusty would have to answer as a penalty for the privilege of talking—which was one of the indulgences granted to trusties.

Duryea took his hat from the rack and was about to leave the office, when there came a slight rap at the door.

"Come in," he called.

The door opened and two brown-clad trusties entered and came to attention. One of them saluted in as soldierly a fashion as the most exacting martinet could have wished. The other made a very poor showing, but Duryea was not in a critical mood. Each of the prisoners was carrying several old cloths in his hand.

"Gee! Here's two of 'em now—made to order?" chuckled the secretary, to himself.

"Well, what do you want?" he questioned, returning the salute.

"Mr. McCabe ordered us to polish the desk, sir," replied the taller of the two, who wore the number 515 upon his breast.

"The devil he did! What's struck McCabe, all of a sudden? This is some bad day to butt into this office, but you can work until the Major comes back. Get busy now, and be mighty careful not to scratch the mahogany. The warden'll have you strung up by the thumbs if you damage the desk. He's some in love with it."

The convict who had answered the secretary's question smiled a little and his companion grinned broadly at the implied savagery of the warden.

The secretary made no comment, but he was inwardly amused by the trusties' evident understanding of the Major's humane peculiarities.

"Don't let any green moss grow between your fingers, boys," said Duryea, as he departed. "The warden won't stand for any crossed wires in his office, and he'll not be gone very long. If any visitors come in that don't look phony, hunt me up. I'll be at the chief deputy's office. You can jolly the oreide

ones, anyway you like, so long as you are polite to them—and don't bother me."

The prisoners saluted and immediately set to work at the desk. They had worked on in silence for some moments, when the shorter of the two men suddenly stopped rubbing.

"Say, Pal, how'd youse git de soft snap?"

"Soft snap? I don't quite understand, Stubby," replied his co-worker.

Pete Johnson, alias "Stubby," officially labeled 611, waved his polishing cloth and said impatiently:

"Oh, hell! Cut out de guff! Youse knows what I mean. Dis pull—dis trusty business—an' de rags? D'ye git me?"

No. 515 evidently was puzzled.

"Pull? W—why, I really don't know that I had any pull. The chief deputy warden, Mr. McCabe, told me I'd been made a trusty. That's all I know about it."

"De hell ye say! An' youse didn't have no pull?"

"Not that I'm aware of."

"Straight goods?"

"Straight as a plumb line, Stubby," laughed the other.

Stubby glared at his companion in astonishment.

"Sufferin' Mike! Will ye listen to dat! Youse must ha' made one hell of a hit wit de old man. Guess he must ha' got onto yer eddication." The convict grinned and threw out his chest. "Reckon he likes ter have us eddicated guys 'round him."

No 515 smiled indulgently.

"Then we're pretty solid with the warden, eh, Stubby?"

"Surest t'ing ye know," chuckled Stubby, sagely

nodding his head. "But I'm t'inkin' dat de gang down in little old Noo York had more to do wit my gittin dis snap dan my eddication did."

"The gang!" exclaimed 515.

"Sure—de gang. D' youse know how I happened ter git collared? 'Twuzn't no damned bull did it, youse can betcher life on that. There was one o' dem—what de papers calls carnivals o' crime' goin' on;" he grinned reminiscently, "an' I was doin' me share o' de stick-ups. Everybody was a howlin' at de police, an' dey just *had* ter make good. Well, de front office rounds up some o' de big crooks an' tells 'em dat de p'lice is in Dutch wit de public, an' has ter come to de front—an' do it quick. See? De crooks knows what dat means—it means dat dey has ter git somebody collared to save de faces o' de boss bulls an' de main squeeze at de City Hall."

Stubby's face reflected pride of accomplishment.

"I'd pulled off a big stick-up in Brooklyn a few nights before," he continued, "an' de papers was a raisin' merry hell—an' no names mentioned but de bulls'."

The convict's expression grew unpleasant to look upon as he went on:

"Well, de gang plays dat it's up ter me dis time, ter be de fall-guy. A pal o' mine puts me wise, an' I lamms, but dey chases me clear ter Buffalo, catches me in a dump up dere an' beats me up good an' plenty—gives me all dat's comin', from brass knucks ter de boots. Den de gang raps me ter de bulls in old Buff," he snarled savagely, "an' dey collars me an' telegraphs ter de main front-office squeeze in Noo York an' puts him next. The big squeeze down dere sends a couple o' bulls from Central after me, takes me back, chucks me inter de Tombs an' puts me troo de mill. De beak was onto his job an' gives

it to me light. I only gits five years. After I gits in stir, de gang an' de front office gits busy an' has me put on as a trusty. See?" He laughed raucously. "'Trusty!' Dat's a joke, as dey'll find out, if ever I gits half a chanst."

During Stubby's recital of his experiences, 515 gazed at him in open-mouthed astonishment.

"What!" he exclaimed, "Do you mean to say that you were sacrificed by your pals to save the reputation of the police?"

"Sure, Mike! Dat's part o' de bizness. It's a case o' youse tickle me an' I'll tickle youse."

"It was pretty rough on you, Stubby."

"Bah! Rough nuttin'; it's part o' de game, I tell ye," Stubby snorted contemptuously. "Youse don't s'pose I'm a goin' ter stay in stir, do ye? Not unless de gang an' de p'lice has lost dere pull wit Tammany. I'll be on dis trusty job a tastin' de sweets o' honest labor, as de Bible sharps sez, fer about six months more—an' den dem gates out yonder'll open just like dat door in de fairy book, an' don't youse fergit it. An' it won't never be my turn to be de fall-guy agin—not no more. An' de gang better not make no mistakes in drawin' de numbers, neither. See?" His eyes gleamed ominously and his jaw hardened.

"What a horrible system!" exclaimed 515.

"Is——dat——so? D'youse t'ink dat de system dat put youse here has got anyt'ing on it?"

No. 515 looked at his fellow prisoner in wide-eyed bewilderment.

"System!" he exclaimed,"—system that put *me* here!" He grasped Stubby by the arm. "What on earth do you mean, Stubby?"

"See here, old pal, youse is in fer murder, ain't ye?"

"Yes, for a murder I never committed."

"Ah, chee! Fergit it! Don't try to git by wid any o' dat bull-con! Dat's what dey all say—all but de crooks. De lily-white gents an' de bums is always innercent."

"But it is the God's truth, Stubby, I *am* innocent!" insisted 515, earnestly.

Stubby shrugged his powerful shoulders.

"All right, Bo; s'pose we let it go at dat. But youse is in stir all de same, ain't ye?"

"Obviously."

"It's a cinch, ain't it?"

"Admitted."

"An' d' youse know what put ye in stir?"

"Yes—the evidence of an infernal fool of a union labor agitator, who was so excited he couldn't tell a hawk from a hand-saw, and a lot of crazy, drunken Italians who would have testified against their own mothers, if the suggestion had been made to them!"

No. 611 laughed derisively.

"Say, pal, but youse *is* an easy mark! De bummest lawyer dat ever hangs out in a p'lice court, could ha' got youse off, if dere hadn't been somethin' behind dat case."

No. 515 crumpled his polishing cloth in both hands and threw it violently to the floor.

"Something behind it!"

"Yes, dat's what I said—somethin' behind it."

"Come out in the open, Stubby!" commanded 515, sternly, grasping him violently by the shoulder. "Come, show your hand. What have you got up your sleeve?"

Stubby winced, but ejaculated admiringly:

"Say, pal, I'd like ter have youse fer a pardner. Dat grip o' yours is a bird! Did youse ever—"

"Never mind that, now," interrupted 515, releasing Stubby's shoulder. "Tell me what you're driving at, man. We haven't much time for riddles."

"All right—it's a bet! Youse is wakin' up," exclaimed Stubby. "Yer monicker's Parkyn, ain't it?"

No. 515 was so astonished that he actually jumped.

"Yes, but how did you—?"

"Oh, I know dat, de same as I knows a hull lot more about youse dat youse don't know about yerself. See, here, Bo, just ter show ye how much more a guy like me knows dan youse eddicated stiffs, I'll tell ye what happened ter mamma's little darlin' boy. Youse got inter a mixup wit some Guineas, didn't ye? Reg'lar rough-house, wit rods a poppin' an' chives a slashin' an' stabbin' ter beat hell. Am I wise, hey?"

"Yes, I tried to stop them from fighting."

"An' got what was comin' to ye, just what any guy always gits when he sticks his bill inter other folks' bizness."

"We won't discuss that point, Stubby."

"Better not, pal, I got youse there. Well, d'youse remember one o' de guys in dat racket wuz a Mick?"

"Yes, the fellow of whom I spoke, a new man named O'Connor. He joined the gang just before the strike, and made a business of stirring up trouble among the men. That's why I suspected him of being a union agitator."

"He butted in an' tried to help youse, didn't he?" queried Stubby, with a knowing leer.

"Yes, but my opinion is that he went into the fight on Donnybrook Fair principles, and was too drunk to know much of what happened afterward."

Stubby's frame shook with merriment, and he laughed so boisterously that 515 glanced in alarm at the open door and windows left ajar by Duryea.

"S—sh! Stubby! Don't forget the stoneyard!"

"Righto! I've got ye," grinned 611, rubbing his back in painful recollection. He mockingly continued in a lower tone: "O'Connor drunk! For de love o' Mike! Wouldn't dat cook ye?"

Stubby's face was purplish-red with suppressed emotion. He almost exploded again, but recalling his companion's hint of the stone-yard, checked himself.

"Say, Pal, did youse ever hear o' Bull Hennessy?"

"Of course. He's one of the Tammany ward bosses in lower New York. He contracts for nearly all the labor on the New York Central. He supplied the men for the job I was superintending when—"

"Sure, you're wise," interrupted Stubby. "Well, Bull don't like you any too much—not so well as his frail does, eh?"

"His frail?"

"Sure," replied Stubby, impatiently, "his skoit—his goil, Jack Halloran's daughter."

No. 515 gazed at him in amazement for a moment and then blazed with indignation.

"His girl! Halloran's daughter? Not only is Hennessy a confounded fool, but I was merely courteous and friendly to Miss Halloran. She—"

His innate chivalry came to the fore. A woman's heart must not be laid bare, least of all, to a convict—and by another convict.

"And so far as I know," he continued, "the young woman was not especially interested in me. Hennessy was jealous without reason—even if he had any claim on the girl, which I very much doubt."

"Gee! but youse has got bum lamps! We'll let your side of it go at dat, but, all de same, you looked like de goods to de goil, an' Bull gits onto it. He ain't no bute himself, so he guesses de rest."

"Yes, but granting that all you say is true, what has that to do with the case?"

"Say, Cull, but youse *is* easy—easy as stickin' up a lush! You sure ought ter see a ockerlist an' git them lamps tinkered. Youse is blinked on both sides, an' it's a shame to keep youse in de pit. I'll be gittin' cold feet in a minute, an' throw up the job o' rappin'. I ain't stuck on it nohow, an' dunno how de hell I ever gits started wit it."

"Go on, Stubby, I'm listening."

"Yes, wit yer feet! Yer listeners is like yer lamps, dey needs a speshulist. I'll go on spielen' all right, if youse'll wake up, but it's a pipe dat youse'll need a diagram."

"Go on, man, go on!" urged 515 eagerly, "I'll stand for the diagram."

"Youse'd git what's comin' te ye, if I'd leave ye up in dè air. Blokes like youse gives me a pain. Ye reads so many books dat ye don't know nuttin'." By way of impressing this point, Stubby curiously inspected his fellow trusty, as though he were a menagerie exhibit.

"Well," he went on, condescendingly, "I don't s'pose youse is ter blame fer not catchin' on quick; it's de way youse is brung up, so I'll go on rappin'. Ye got up against a frame-up, good an' plenty. O'Connor's real monicker is Butch Harris, an' he's as English as any crook what ever landed on Manhattan Island. He's a strong-arm guy, an' a peach at de bizness. Bull Hennessy put him on dat construction job ter cook youse. See? He was goin'

ter croak ye, some night, in de reg'lar way, an' trun ye inter de wet, but dat strike comes on, an' he frames up somethin' safer."

"Good God, Stubby, do you mean to tell me that—"

Stubby's sensibilities plainly were ruffled.

"Youse heard me whisperin', didn't ye? What d'ye think I'm doin', stallin' ye?"

"But, man! how did you learn all this?"

"Dat's part o' me system, Cull. I gits dat dope by de underground, just before I gits it in de neck from de gang."

A glad light shone in 515's eyes. He fervently grasped both of Stubby's hands in his own.

"Thank God! I shall be free at last, Stubby! I'll be grateful to you as long as I live! You're a friend in need—the best friend I ever had!"

"S—sh! Cheese it, ye bloody lobster! Not so loud! Remember dat stoneyard youse was spielin' about! An' let go o' me mitts—I might need dem old lunch hooks ter reach fer hand-outs, some day."

No. 515 released Stubby's hands and went on in a lower tone. "We'll lay the matter before the warden, and with the evidence you can assist me in getting, I'll—"

"Oh, will ye?" Stubby broke in. "I—guess—nit! An' say, Bo, cut out dat friendship bizness. Dere ain't goin' ter be no evidence—Savvy?"

This staggered No. 515.

W—what!" he stammered, huskily, "Do you mean that you will refuse to—"

"Wakin' up, ain't ye, old pal?" interrupted Stubby, affecting admiration. "Gittin' wise ter little Petey, eh, Cull? You'll be one o' dem mind-readin' sharps yet, if ye don't watch out. I ain't givin'

nuttin' away ter nobody. See? I've rapped ter youse, an' dat's me limit."

No. 515 was fairly trembling with excitement. He laid his hand on Stubby's shoulder and looked appealingly into his cunning eyes.

"And you'll allow me to remain in prison, when a word from you would clear me? My God, man—are you not human?"

"Nah, I ain't human," growled Stubby, irritably, throwing off the other's hand. "I'm a crook, dat's all. D' youse git dat? What de bloody hell did youse, or your kind, ever do fer me or my kind, hey? We lives on youse guys—an' youse does de best ye can ter put us away! Who builds de jails an' de scaffolds, an' hires lawyers, an' bulls, an' beaks ter feed 'em an' keep 'em full? Youse an' your kind! Help youse? Not on yer damned life!"

"Very well," said 515, indignantly, "I'll take the matter up with the warden, and he will—"

"Youse an' de warden'll play hell!—I—don't—t'ink," interjected Stubby, with a sneer. "My word's as good as yours, an' a damned sight better, youse can gamble on dat. One jail bird's as good as anudder—only he ain't. A system's a system, an' a pull's a pull, when we gits down ter cases. Don't let dat git by youse—me system an' me pull!"

"Would it mean nothing to you to help an innocent man get his liberty," pleaded 515, earnestly. "Man! Man! Think what freedom would mean to me!"

"Yes, I'm t'inkin' what it'd mean to youse, but I'm t'inkin' a damned sight harder what yer freedom 'd mean ter me, Cull," Stubby went on, obstinately. "D'ye know where I'd git off? Of course ye don't, so I'll put youse wise. I wants ter do biz-

ness in de little ole town o' Noo York, an' if I raps on Bull Hennessy I'm as good as croaked. D'ye know what happens to a snitch? He lasts about as long as a dish o' snow in de devil's kitchen! He's cooked so damned quick dat it makes death by lightnin' look like creepin' paralysis! Charity begins ter home, old sox!"

The convict paused as if to let his speech sink in.

"An' dere's somethin' else dat I might as well wise ye up ter. Butch Harris an' me is old pals, an' I ain't goin' ter trow him down. See? Why, dat guy gits hooked up wit me inside of a week after he lands in Noo York, an' we fights fer de middleweight champeenship o' de Bowery."

The ex-pug grinned crookedly as he recalled the strenuous beginning of his friendship with the Strangler.

"Say, but dat was a peach of a go, an' don't youse fergit it! Sixteen rounds to a draw an' a split purse —an' I gits a split lip an' dis tin ear," and Stubby laid his finger tenderly on his deformed auricle.

No. 515 began to comprehend the hopelessness of the situation. He buried his face in his hands and quivered with conflicting emotions.

"Say, Cull," said Stubby, reprovingly, with sudden inspiration, "what in hell are youse beefin' about, anyhow? A live bird in jail is wort' a t'ousand o' dese society lobsters dead outside! Youse might ha' got dis," and he made a motion with his hand as if to choke himself, "wit a perfectly nice, good little knot under yer left ear! De stir sure ain't no Fift' Av'noo hotel," he continued consolingly, "but it beats a block o' ice, an' a nice, cold, white slab in de morgue ter hell an' gone. Maybe youse'll git a pull, yerself, someday. A pull's wort' some-

thin' in de stir, but it ain't wort' two whoops in hell in de bone-yard. Savvy?"

No. 515 dropped his hands from his face and made a last desperate effort to move the inflexible Stubby, pleading his cause with eloquence and emotion which would have stirred the very soul of a less stolid listener.

"There's a poor, widowed, broken-hearted old woman in New York, Stubby, who is dying by inches, of grief and lack of care, because her boy, her only child, is locked up in Sing Sing for a crime of which he is as innocent as a babe! Won't you do your part to save her? Won't you help to send her boy home to her? Remember, Stubby, I am all she has in the world. She needs me—great God in heaven, man! how she needs me! Come, be human! You can square yourself for everything you ever have done that was evil, by just this one kind act."

While 515 was thus pleading, Stubby's eyes flashed with admiration for the other's eloquence, but he showed not the least sign of relenting; on the contrary, his jaw set more truculently than ever.

"Say ole pal, youse oughter be on de stage at Wallacks! Booth an' McCullough, nor none o' dem actor guys, ain't got nuttin' on youse. But," he continued, resentfully, "dat mellerdrammer stuff don't git youse nuttin' off'n me. Guess yer poor old mudder is yer last card, what?"

"Poor old mudder, eh?" and he chuckled sardonically. "Poor—old—mudder!" he mocked. De best I ever gits out o' mine wuz a bat in de jaw! Happy days! Nit! Don't youse ever pull dat old mudder gag on a Bowery boy—not no more, 'cause it won't make a hit wit him—won't never git youse nuttin', nohow. See?"

"Is there anything I can say; anything I can do?" entreated 515.

"Nuttin, doin', Cull; nuttin' doin'. S—sh!"

A gruff voice was heard in the hall.

"Cheese it, Bo!" exclaimed Stubby, "Get a wiggle on! Here comes McCabe!"

Both men grabbed their cloths and set to work with a will, rubbing away at the desk as if their very lives depended upon the rapidity with which they accomplished their task.

McCabe appeared in the door and stood eyeing them suspiciously for a moment.

"Here, you fellows!" he called to them sternly, "how long does it take ye to polish a desk? What the devil are you two dubs tryin' to do, take the skin off'n it?"

No. 515 came to attention. His companion straightened up after a fashion, admiringly looked at his work, with the air of a connoisseur, and awkwardly saluted.

"It's all done, sir," he said. "Fine job, too!" He turned to 515. "Ain't it, Pal?"

"Never mind expert opinions," said the chief deputy, gruffly. "No. 611, ye're wanted in the garden. Get a move on ye, now!" McCabe eyed Stubby sharply as he slouched out of the office with the characteristic hang-dog prison gait—which always is unconsciously exaggerated under official scrutiny.

The officer went to the desk and critically inspected it.

"That's a hell of a job!" he sneered, to 515. There's been too much gab goin' on here—an' too little elbow grease. Get busy now, my man, an' finish that desk right. When you're through report to me."

McCabe then left the office.

A few minutes later No. 515 violently threw his cloth down on the desk.

"My God!" he exclaimed, with all the bitterness of just resentment and injured pride. "To think that I have come to this. Imprisoned—insulted—degraded!—and for a crime of which I am innocent! I'd rather die than longer submit to it! And that probably is what it will mean if I make a break for it. The best I am likely to get will be what that ruffian, Gleason, gave that poor devil who tried it the other day."

His eyes flashed defiantly, and deep lines of stern and dogged determination appeared in his face.

"But even that," he said, between his set teeth, "is better than this, and I'm going to chance it—and at the first opportunity. If I fail—" His eyes flashed savagely; "well, they'll never take me alive! If I succeed—God help you, Mr. Bull Hennessy!"

His eyes fell on the desk and he caught sight of a heavy metal paper-weight. He picked it up, examined it critically, and thoughtfully weighed it in his hand.

"When the time arrives," he muttered, "this may come in handy. It's not much of a weapon, but it's better than bare hands."

The prisoner was in the act of putting the crude weapon into the pocket of his rough jacket, when a heavy step was heard coming down the hall toward the office. He hastily pocketed the weight, picked up his cloth and set to work at the desk, polishing as vigorously as though he were under an urgent time contract which soon was to expire. The footsteps came nearer and stopped at the office door.

"Is the warden about?" inquired a deep, throaty voice.

No. 515 was startled almost out of his presence

of mind. He would have known that pompous, overbearing voice among a thousand! Its owner paused long enough to light a cigar and noisily puff it into action, then stepped into the room and towards the desk.

Ignoring the visitor, the convict, with deliberately exasperating inattention, went on with his polishing as though oblivious to everything but the job in hand. He paused at times to critically survey the shining surface of the desk, but did not look up.

"Say, what the hell's the matter with you, anyhow? Are you deef?" The speaker plainly was losing his patience.

The prisoner did not respond and the caller stepped closer.

"See here, me good feller," he said, angrily, between violent puffs at his cigar, "if you're not deef, you're—"

"Mighty careful with whom I converse, eh, Mr. Bull Hennessy?" satirically replied 515, straightening up, throwing the cloth to the floor and looking the Boss squarely in the eye.

Hennessy fairly gasped at the man's impudence. He menacingly clenched his fist, and leaning over the desk, looked closely at the prisoner.

"Oh, ho, me laddie buck!" he exclaimed, with a start of astonishment. "So, it's you, is it, Mr. Bob Parkyn? Why ain't you out in the yard maulin' stone along with the rest o' the jail-birds?" he glowered. "Who the hell took you off'n that nice little job, anyhow?"

No. 515 coolly stepped around the desk and confronted Hennessy.

"None of your business, Hennessy!"

"I'll make it my business, damned quick, when I

see the warden!" raged the Boss, starting for the door.

The prisoner intercepted him, and Hennessy appeared somewhat disturbed.

"What's your hurry, Bull? You're not quite so bold when you're cornered, are you? You're a game chicken outside, with your gang of thugs behind you—gamer still, when you have somebody to do your fighting for you! The yellow streak is on top, just now, isn't it, you hound?" said the convict, taking a step towards the Boss, who moved back a pace.

Hennessy was purple with rage, but perceptibly alarmed. He was "dead up against it." Here was a quality of courage new to him, and it was a facer for the bully. He was used to men who weakened and cringed before the wrath of the mighty Boss—men who bowed the knee to his every whim. He knew how to handle such men. But here was a man in prison, a jail-bird in his cage, who was not afraid of him—of him, the redoubtable Bull Hennessy, with a famous record of glove fights, battles with "bare knucks," rough-and-tumble scraps and gun-plays galore!

Yes, this was different, quite! Who ever heard of a jail-bird with a moral kick in him? Yet here was one who, though handicapped by every possible disadvantage, faced him with high and indomitable spirit and quailed not before his mighty frown nor trembled at his throaty bluster! What was more, and this really was incredible, this convict actually threatened him; threatened the unchallenged king of the most desperate elements of the underworld of the great metropolis; threatened the great Boss Hennessy, who was feared, not only by

the social dregs of the underworld, but by the social scum—the aristocratic crooks and grafters of the upperworld—and by the "men higher up" in the world of politics and municipal administration.

Bull Hennessy was "buffaloed for fair!" Deep down in his coarse brutal heart, he had the tinge of ochre common to most of his kind. He always had been a living bluff—he himself always knew it.

Nobody ever recognized the "yellow streak" in a man quicker than did Hennessy himself. And this man in the garb of infamy, immured within walls from which, if he committed any overt act of violence against the Boss, he could not escape, had called the bluff of a lifetime!

Hennessy intuitively comprehended, also, that he was faced, not only with a moral intrepidity which to him was a novel and uncomfortable experience in man-handling, but with a physical courage as well, which, as his critical eye long ago had recognized, was backed by the muscular ability and science essential to making good.

When, in his frame-up with Butch Harris, at Black Bill's, the Boss told that discreet worthy that Bob Parkyn was a "pipe," he lied, and he lied deliberately. He was a wise and experienced judge of fighting men and knew a tough job of man-handling when he saw it. It looked as if somebody's chickens had come home to roost, and Bull Hennessy was experiencing another new and especially uncomfortable sensation; he felt dreadfully alone in the warden's big office with that jail-bird.

No. 515 took another menacing step toward his enemy, who discreetly stepped back out of arm range.

There was a dangerous glint in the convict's eyes.

"Got away with your bluff for a long time, didn't

you, Hennessy? Fine day for a call, eh?" he sneered, stepping still closer.

Bull turned his head and hunched up his shoulder, as if to block a blow.

"This wouldn't be a good place ter take a punch at me, me friend," he blustered.

No. 515 was now within easy hitting distance and clenched his fist in a manner most disquieting to the Boss.

"Wouldn't it?" he gibed. "Well, if my eyes are right, I see a place that's a peach—just southwest of that contemptible mouth of yours, and—it's—so tempting!"

He drew back his fist as if to let it fly at Hennesy's face. The Boss side-stepped and made a motion toward his hip pocket, but checked it half way.

"Well," mocked the convict, dropping his hands to his sides, "why don't you pull your gun? Make a *good* bluff while you are about it. What's the matter—afraid you couldn't get away with it?"

Instantly comprehending that the prisoner did not intend to hit him, the Boss regained his assurance.

"Get away with it?" he said, impudently, "you betcher life I could get away with it, dead easy!"

"Oh, no you couldn't, Mr. Thomas-Boss-Bull-Hennessy!" returned 515, contemptuously. "You couldn't get away with it any more than *I* could get away with it, if I gave you what's coming to you, you white-livered cur! It would be easy enough to kill in self-defense, a poor devil of a convict—if there were not several persons who know how I happen to be here. Wouldn't be safe to kill me, would it? You're an infernal rascal, and a low-down yellow dog, Hennessy, but you're not quite a fool."

"What in hell are you drivin' at?" queried the Boss, visibly agitated and actually shriveling under the convict's scathing denunciation.

No. 515 replied with great deliberation, enunciating every word with a distinctness that grated painfully upon Mr. Hennessy's now acutely sensitive ear.

"Just this, Bull Hennessy. I'm an innocent man, and you know it. You jobbed me, you infernal scoundrel! Butch Harris could tell something mighty interesting. And there are others who could tell. Perhaps they never *will* tell, but that won't save you, Hennessy," and the convict gave his enemy a savage look that bored clear through to the back of his thick head and for a moment actually jarred him out of the running.

He quickly came back, however, and asked, defiantly, albeit with some trepidation:

"Well, what th' hell are you goin' to do about it, Mr. Jail-bird?"

The prisoner shook his fist threateningly under the Boss's red nose and said, with deliberate emphasis:

"I'm—going—to get—my—freedom,—Bull Hennesy! I don't know how, nor when, but I'll get it. Then I'm going to find you, my friend, and give you a chance to call me a jail-bird again—just once—and that's the only chance you'll ever get, Mr. Thomas-Boss-Bull-Crook-Hennessy! You can guess the rest."

Hennessy pulled himself together, threw his stub out of the window, laughed derisively and lighted a fresh cigar.

"But ye're not out yet, me brave buster, an' I'll take damned good care that ye don't git out! An' I'm goin' to take better care o' yer health, too. It's

a shame fer ye t' be cooped up like you are. Ye need more exercise, an' I'll see that ye git it. It's wrong for an athlete like you t' git out o' trainin' an' let his muscle go all t' the bad. I'll speak ter the main screw about it." He paused as if reflecting, and then went on, "Now the stone-yard would—"

"Blaze away, you dirty thug!" No. 515 broke in, contemptuously. "If I'm sent back to the stone-yard, my conscience won't hurt me so much if I ever make my get-away and pay my debts." He again shook his fist in the Boss's face. "And you're right about the muscles—I'll need them some day, to show my appreciation to my benefactor, one Bull Hennessy."

With a final look of hatred and contempt, No. 515 gathered up his polishing rags from the desk and left the room. As he made his exit, he fired one parting shot.

"Do your worst, you contemptible hound! I'll owe you just that much more on settlement day. And by the way, Hennessy," he sneered, "try and show some manners when the warden comes in. He's a gentleman, and such cattle as you should annoy him as little as possible."

As the convict vanished, Hennessy heaved a most prodigious sigh of relief, relighted his cigar, which he had allowed to die out, and cheekily sat down at the desk, in the warden's chair.

Chapter XVIII

MR. HENNESSY GETS ANOTHER JOLT

When Major Donaldson returned to his office and found Boss Hennessy comfortably lolling back in the warden's official chair, his silk hat tipped back on his head, and smoking like Vesuvius in semi-eruption, the old soldier was dumbfounded. For an instant he was so badly feazed that he could not quite get his bearings.

Not so the occupant of the chair. His monumental nerve never for a second forsook him. He peered through the dense clouds of strong tobacco smoke with which he had enveloped himself, and observing the Major, patronizingly remarked, without rising:

"Good mornin', I s'pose you're the warden."

The Major had to reach pretty deep down to catch his breath.

"I—yes, I—I am the—warden," he finally managed to gasp.

"Thought so," commented Hennessy. "You sure look it."

"Thanks, awfully," said the Major. "Would you —er, mind taking this chair?" He pointed to a large easy chair to the right of his desk. "You'll find it much more comfortable. The one you are occupying is—er, rather stiff and formal—quite official in fact, and more suited to one of my—er, modest tastes."

"Oh, just so, p'raps it is. Don't do fer the warden t' have things too soft, does it?"

Hennessy laughed at his own witless remark, but the Major's gentle irony went clear over his head. He dropped into the proffered easy chair, and took several vigorous puffs at his cigar.

"And won't you give me your hat, sir?" said the Major, regaining his self-possession and politely concealing, as best he could, his aversion to the intruder.

"Oh, no, that's all right. I'm not sweatin' any. What's the use o' botherin'?" and the Boss waved his hand magnanimously at the warden.

"But I insist," said the Major, with forced cordiality. "It's not often that so fine a hat decorates our rack," and with a fine show of *bonhomie,* he removed his visitor's head-gear.

"It's a Jettson, isn't it?" He glanced at the stamp on the band. "Late style and quite expensive, I should judge," pursued the warden.

"Right ye are," puffed Hennessy, proudly. "Very latest, too. That feller, Jettson, rolled me fer eight bucks fer that lid. What d'ye know about that?"

Hennessy removed the cigar from his coarse lips and held it ostentatiously between the fingers of one hand, while with the index finger of the other he proceeded noisily to explore his capacious mouth, evidently attempting to dislodge certain particles of food which had been lingering since breakfast, apparently in the near vicinity of his wisdom teeth. The warden could not help making a mental estimate of the length of Hennessy's huge, hairy finger, relative to the dimensions of his enormous mouth.

"Shall I get you a glass of water?" asked the

Major, politely, endeavoring with indifferent success to conceal his disgust.

"Oh, no, thanks, not a-tall—not a-tall!" The Boss put up his hand as if to defend himself from a threatened assault. "But if ye have any o' the real stuff, why—"

"Ah, I see," said the Major, with a twinkle in his eye which suggested that he was beginning to be amusingly entertained. "You really would honor me by taking a wee drop."

"Make it a reg'lar sized ball, Warden," grinned Hennessy, thirstily.

The Major went to a near-by cabinet and returned with a bottle, glasses and a siphon of seltzer, setting them on the end of the desk convenient to his guest's hand.

"Help yourself, sir," said the Major, hospitably.

And the Boss did "help" himself, covering the glass with his hand to conceal the fact that it was full to the brim. He managed to toss it off without spilling it, a feat at which the Major secretly wondered, even if it did not inspire him with admiration.

"Seltzer?" inquired the warden.

Hennessy again waved a defensive and deprecatory hand.

"No, thanks. Not a-tall—not a-tall. Doc. Loomis says that fizz water's bad fer me kidneys. They gits on the bum once in a while, an' I have ter take good care of 'em. Carbolic—er, I mean carbonic acid's bad medicine."

The Boss suddenly bethought himself of the usual bibulous amenities between gentlemen.

"Ain't you goin' ter have a drink, Warden? It's a wise Doc. that don't take his own medicine, but that's damn good stuff, b'lieve me!" and he looked

avidly at the bottle. "Old Dormitory, I'll bet," and he turned the bottle around so that he might inspect the label. "Sure, I thought so," and he grinned complacently at the thought that he had made good as a connoisseur.

"Since you endorse my whiskey, I will take a little," said the warden.

"Sure, let her go! An' I'll join ye," enthused Hennessy, warmly.

The Major poured out a small libation, and his guest made haste to "join" him—with another spirituous bath.

"Here's how, Warden."

"Drink hearty, sir."

Having emptied the glass, Hennessy sank back comfortably in his chair and puffed away like mad at his cigar, enwreathing himself in huge clouds of smoke, which being wafted in the Major's direction by the breeze from the open windows, pretty nearly gave that dignified person an asthmatic attack.

"Got a cold, hain't ye?" asked Hennessy, solicitously. "Ever try Dr. Pull's Pulmonic Elixir? It's sure great! Knock a cold out in the first round."

The Major confessed the cold, as the least embarrassing explanation of his symptoms, but strenuously denied ever having enjoyed the advantage of Dr. Pull's wonderful compound.

He finally ceased his coughing and wheezing and succeeded in drawing a comfortable breath.

"Pardon me, sir," he remarked, politely; "you have a slight advantage over me. Our introduction was hardly mutual, Mr. ——"

"Sure, I forgot. Me name's Hennessy—Thomas Hennessy, of New York," replied the Boss, impressively.

The great man expanded his huge chest, took a vigorous puff at his fat black cigar and confidently awaited the profound and sensational effect which his name usually produced.

The Major obdurately refused to be impressed.

"Ah, indeed? I'm glad to meet you, Mr.—ah, Shaughnessy."

Here was another new and disturbing experience for Hennessy. His face exhibited not only astonishment, but annoyance.

"Hennessy," he reiterated, "Thomas Hennessy."

"From New York, I believe you said," remarked the Major, blandly.

The Boss was distinctly piqued.

"Yes, from—New—York. Here's me card."

The warden took the card and cursorily glanced at it, then looked blankly at the Boss.

"Oh, yes, I've heard of you, Mr.——" He again referred to the bit of pasteboard. "Mr.—ah, 'Hennessy—Thomas Hennessy.' What can I do for you?"

The Boss now was thoroughly disconcerted. His assurance temporarily was shed like a cast-off garment.

"Why—er, ye see," he ventured, haltingly, "there's a couple o' friends o' mine here in the pen an'—" He puffed frantically at his cigar.

"Employes?" asked the warden, laconically.

"Why, no, they're——" Hennessy hesitated. He instinctively felt that he was "in bad," and getting in deeper every minute.

"Prisoners?" suggested the Major, suavely.

"Y—yes. Well, ye see, Warden," floundered the Boss, "they're not exactly friends o' *mine,* but—"

"I understand," interrupted the Major. "Friends of the party, eh?"

"Yes, that's it. Have a cigar, Warden?"

Hennessy took a handful of cigars from his pocket and leaning toward the warden offered them to him for a selection.

"Thanks, no. Not during business hours."

Hennessy dove down into another pocket and extracted a box of cigarettes.

"Coffin nail, eh?"

The Major's face plainly showed that cigarettes were not one of his weaknesses.

"I never smoke cigarettes, thank you."

"Me, too, Pete!" exclaimed Hennessy, violently puffing at his weed. "I only carry 'em for these guys who can't stand real tobacco," he continued, confidently. "Better put a couple o' these smokes in yer pocket, they're the real things, Warden, take it from me—straight havanas—three fer a half, same as I'm smokin'."

"I shall have to—to decline, thank you," labored the Major, beginning to wheeze again.

Hennessy, to use an expression of his own, was not "landing the jolly," He replaced the cigars and cigarettes in his pocket with an air of depression and discouragement.

"Haven't come after any of my boarders, I hope, Mr. Shaugh—er, I mean, Hennessy?" the warden inquired, ironically.

The Boss braced up a little and after several explosive, and to the Major, suffocating puffs, regained a little of his customary pomposity.

"Not a-tall—not a-tall. Ye see, Warden, the fellers I spoke of, is pretty good hustlers, an' the boys want ter—well, *yo*u know how it is. We've kind o'

got ter take care of 'em. They ain't very rugged, an' we'd like to have ye give 'em jobs that's—*you* know."

"Suited to their strength, eh?" said the Major, with blunt sarcasm. "Easy places for men with strong pulls. What are their names, Mr.——" He again looked at the visitor's card—"Mr. Hennessy?"

The Major's sarcasm was completely lost on the Boss, who was fast regaining his self-assurance.

"Henry Haggerty and James Kennedy."

The Major wrote the names on a memorandum pad and turned to Duryea, who, just a moment before, had quietly entered the office and returned to his desk, unobserved by his employer, who had been so absorbed in his conversation with Boss Hennessy, that he had not even noticed his secretary's absence.

"Mr. Duryea, kindly look up the records of Henry Haggerty and James Kennedy."

Duryea, with a bustling show of industry, promptly produced the records.

"Shall I read them, sir?"

"If you please, Mr. Duryea."

"'No. 710. Henry Haggerty, alias "Buck" Haggerty, alias "Big-mouthed Harry," alias "Hank Higgins," New York City. Committed March 1, 1876. Ten years for criminal assault.'

"'No. 727. James Kennedy, alias "Dublin Jim," alias "Bad Jimmy," New York City. Committed June 1, 1875. Twenty years for manslaughter.'"

"What are they working at?"

"Haggerty is in the chair shop, and Kennedy is making brooms, sir."

"Thank you, Mr. Duryea."

The warden turned to the Boss.

"Your protegés do seem a little delicate, Mr. Hennessy," he said, sarcastically. "I suppose we really shall have to do something for them."

The Major took out his watch and looked at the time, wondering if Hennessy would take so delicate a hint. He was gratified to see him rise from his chair, apparently preparatory to leaving.

"Then you'll take care o' them fellers, will ye, Warden?"

"In the name of humanity—and politics—yes. Is there anything else that I can do for you—and the boys?"

Hennessy failed to note the cutting sarcasm of the warden's reply.

"Yes," he said, pompously, "there is one more little matter. I noticed a feller, a trusty, workin' round here in the office when I came in, that hadn't oughter have so much liberty. He's No. 515."

"Indeed! and why shouldn't he have so much liberty, pray?" asked the Major, the light of battle beginning to gleam in his dark eyes.

"Oh, he's a bad egg!" snapped Hennessy, "an' likely t' raise hell, most any old time. Better put him inter the stone-yard. A little exercise'll do him a lot o' good. See?"

"So, he's a bad egg, eh? As bad as Buck Haggerty and Bad Jimmy, think?"

This was a facer for Hennessy. He was so nonplussed that he did not see the storm that was coming. The Major put in another satirical thrust.

"Are you not afraid that the stone-yard may be a little too strenuous for the man, Mr. Hennessy? It's quite a bit more so than the chair factory or the broom shop."

"W—why——" stammered the Boss, "I—well, don't you see, it's like this, I——"

"Yes, I see!" said the Major, slowly, as he rose to his full height, fairly towering above Hennessy—big as that worthy was. The old soldier evidently was trying hard to control his temper and keep his dignity off the rocks, but he was on the verge of a mighty explosion.

"See here, Hennessy—you're going just a little too far! You New York rough-necks and politicians can run this institution most of the time, in spite of everything and everybody,"—here the veteran's brakes slipped and things got going wild—"but, by the Great Eternal, sir!" he roared, "I'm going to run it part of the time! I made that man a trusty on my own judgment—and a trusty he'll remain, so long as I see fit! Understand?"

Now Hennessy could not quite comprehend the Major's satirical thrusts and jabs, nor could he have "come back" if he had. He was as slow of wit as he was thick of neck and dense of skull. In his own circle he could exchange repartee with the best of them—repartee that was largely billingsgate and profanity, with a dash of obscenity thrown in by way of relish—but the subtle passes of the Major's satire and irony were too much for him. Here, however, he was in his element. The warden had lost his temper, and this gave his visitor an opening. The Boss had enjoyed vast experience in dealing with men who had said things in anger, and always had been able to hold his own. And so, he recovered all his self-confidence and with it his unparalleled, brazen impudence.

"Oh, ho! me buckaroo; you're goin' ter run this dump ter suit yerself, are ye?" he sneered.

"You heard what I said, sir!" stormed the Major.

"Is—that—so?" sneered Hennessy, exasperatingly. "Well, let me put a bug in yer ear and wise ye up, Mr. Warden. If ye get too gay with *me* I'll show ye that we can run this hotel *all* o' the time—an' don't ye forget it!"

"You will, eh? Well, until I turn it over to you contemptible New York politicians and crooks, I'll run it *my* way!" The Major actually was livid with rage. "Leave my office, sir!" he stormed.

"An' s'pose I don't pull me freight, me gay gazabo, what then?" sneered the Boss.

"I'll have you thrown out of the office and kicked out of the prison—and I'll have it done by that trusty whom you tried to knock!" roared the Major.

The warden was in deadly earnest—the Boss could see that. He had met such persons before and knew the symptoms. He also knew that the warden of a prison, like the captain of a ship, was not safe to trifle with. The Major's authority was supreme, and while Hennessy might get his job later, this was one of the occasions on which an ounce of discretion was worth a ton of "pull"—past, present or future. To show fight would be plain suicide, if the warden was disposed to have it so. There was nothing for Hennessy to do *but* to "pull his freight."

"All right, Bo," he barked, viciously. "I'll beat it, but I'll fix you for this, damn ye, an' don't ye fergit it!" He turned at the door and yelled back: "You'll hear from me good and plenty when I get back ter New York—or my name ain't Thomas Hennessy!"

The Major had regained his sangfroid.

"Thanks," he replied, urbanely, "write real soon,

Mr. Shaughnessy—er, I mean, Hennessy—and don't forget to remember me to the boys!"

The Boss looked brass knucks, rods and blackjacks at the warden for a second and then made his exit, relieving his perturbed spirit by violently slamming the door behind him.

Duryea had been listening with the most intense interest to the altercation between his chief and Bull Hennessy. As soon as their conversation reached the violent stage he quietly went to his own desk, opened a drawer and left it open. The loyal soul shone through his eyes as he stood there, pale, tense, eager, keenly watching the two angry men like a cat at a mousehole. He kept his right hand conveniently near the open drawer, until Hennessy had slammed the door behind his departing wrath. The tension over, Duryea heaved a sigh of relief and with his handkerchief mopped his brow, on which huge globules of perspiration were shining. He then closed the drawer and locked it.

In that drawer, peacefully reposing among the odds and ends of stationery and a lot of photographs of his best girls—not all of them "best," perhaps, but most of them—was a huge Colt, of most satisfying exterior and grimly efficient caliber—ominously suggestive of a compromise between a gas main and a railroad tunnel.

When, some months before, on his uncle's ranch in Arizona, one of Duryea's big-hatted friends presented him with that gun, the cowboy remarked:

"That ole gun is shore reliable, son. It ain't no dude's pop-gun. It'll bore a hole through a feller what a cat can jump through an' never wet a whisker!"—And the weapon certainly looked the part.

"Anything more, sir?" asked the secretary, quietly.

"That is all, for the present, thank you, Howard," and the Major, his dignity quite restored, waved his hand in token of dismissal.

The secretary arranged his papers, closed his desk, and with an affectionate parting glance at his chief, left the room.

"Well," he chuckled to himself as he left the building and entered the jail-yard, "here's where little Bright Eyes gets some more rest without stealing it." His eye roving down the dreary, stone-flagged enclosure, caught sight of McCabe.

"Hello!" he exclaimed, "there goes old Crusty! Hanged if I don't go after him and see if I can't corner him for another gab-fest about the warden. I like to hear the old bear growl."

Chapter XIX

MORE STAR VISITORS

Major Donaldson sat for some time at his desk, quietly reflecting on his experience with Hennessy. He knew that the Boss had almost unlimited political power; he also knew that the fellow was vindictive and revengeful. The obvious inference was not pleasant for the Major to contemplate. Boss Hennessy would try to get his job, and as there was no immediate election in prospect, Tammany would lay a mine under the warden's chair and explode it at any time that seemed expedient to the political underground, gum-shoe-workers, before the old soldier element in politics woke up. He, himself, might even be compelled to light the fuse and explode the mine under his own official seat.

A revolt or a strike among the prisoners, a murder, a wholesale "delivery," or the escape of a single prisoner, could be made the excuse for attacking the warden and, if none of these accidents occurred in the due course of prison events, it was easy enough for interested persons, the "Knights of the Double Cross," to make them happen. The politicians controlled the guards, and had many henchmen among the prisoners.

It also was a very easy thing to "doctor" the prison supply accounts. Those who furnished the supplies would be glad to lend a hand. In the few

months that he had been in office, the old-soldier warden had given much disquiet to the minds, and badly demoralized the profits of these grafters. They would be eager to counter on him, especially if they could land a blow on his pride center by tarnishing his reputation for honesty. This would please the contractors and the men higher up—the corrupt political bosses who absorbed the big graft.

Politics is composed of about five per cent patriotism, five per cent statesmanship, ten per cent "hot air," sixty per cent graft, and twenty per cent mud. The "mud" would be present in larger proportions, were it not that twenty per cent, judiciously thrown, is sufficient to conceal the graft and blacken the other fellow's reputation.

The prospective loss of his position did not bother the Major, from a material standpoint. To him, salary never had been an object. He had taken the wardenship of Sing Sing just as a devout missionary might have penetrated the Congo, or the heart of China. His point of view differed from the missionary's, it is true, but his devotion to humanity was not less sincere—and there are those who believe that aims and methods such as his are more practical, more logical and more productive in results for humanity's weal than anything that ever underlay the zeal of the missionary. But, of course, all philanthropic roads "lead to Rome," even though more things of value travel by some roads than by others.

It seemed hard to Major Donaldson that his work should be interfered with before it had fairly begun. He had hoped to continue it for a while, although he was well aware that, sooner or later, he would have to buck against the system and knew what was likely

to happen. When systems are not stronger than men—stronger even than the men who build them—they are no longer worthy of being called "systems." This is what makes all systems dangerous—and most of them corrupt. Even the good one of today, may be the evil one of tomorrow. The men who dominate systems change from day to day, and sooner or later cupidity and greed for power or place come to the fore.

The Major wished that he might be the entering wedge of a new movement for the prevention of crime and reclamation of criminals. He never had expected to live to see much accomplished, but merely hoped to aid in the pioneer work. He knew that society was not built in a day, and that our penal system was the product of centuries upon centuries of purblind cruelty, ignorance, mismanagement and economic waste. And now—well, the old soldier felt that he had dreamed his dream almost to the end, and was about to be awakened by being thrown into the cold, dirty stream of political machination that has drowned so many official opportunities.

The noon whistles of the prison shops blew shrilly, the factories of the adjacent town joining the stridulent chorus. The booming and hammering and metallic clanking of implements and the hum and rattle of machinery abruptly ceased. The Major started with surprise and looked at his watch.

"Twelve o'clock!" he exclaimed. "Well, who'd have thought it? Where's the morning gone, I wonder?" He smiled reminiscently. "Some of it, I suspect, went with Boss Hennessy—and my job."

"Heigho!" he sighed, "Houses of cards and castles in Spain! I'm up against a glass wall. I can

see some things on the other side that to me look big and grand. But the wall is too high and too smooth to climb; it is too thick and too hard to drill through, and a thousand times longer than the great Chinese Wall. My life will not last long enough to enable me to walk around it and gather some of the things on the other side.

"Bah!" he ejaculated, pessimistically, "I'd better get some leather goggles, climb into the orthodox social band-wagon and stay there—until I grow wings that will take me over that wall." He lit a cigar, went to the window and looked down into the jail-yard.

"Wonder if Hennessy would feel insulted if he saw me smoking during business hours."

He laughed heartily, as he recalled the Boss's "real havanas, three for a half."

"Well, there haven't been many star visitors thus far today, but what was lacking in numbers was compensated for in features of interest and amusement—not to say excitement. That brute, Hennessy, is about the most typic specimen of his class I ever saw.

"I'd like to know what is back of his hatred of that poor devil, Parkyn," he mused. "The Boss has it in for that fellow, all right. I'm going to find out at the first opportunity why he is so anxious to persecute him. That convict looks to me like a man who will tell the truth. Murderers usually do—about everything, at least, but their own crimes." The Major smiled whimsically. "They're the true aristocrats of the world of crime."

A trusty appeared in the jail-yard and went toward the official headquarters.

"Hello! There he is now. By Jove! He's a high

stepper when he thinks nobody's looking—appears like a gentleman, too. I'll not forget to look into his case. From Bull Hennessy's actions, I suspect there may be some interesting developments."

The trusty suddenly halted, and turning, entered the executive building.

At the moment when the Major first caught sight of No. 515 passing the office window, the trusty was on his way to the dining-room, where the prisoners shortly would be herded for their mid-day meal. As he passed the main outer building of the prison, he was accosted from a window by one of the trusties who acted as ushers and escorts for those favored visitors who had friends among the officials, or special permits to make the tour of the prison.

The fellow was hungry, and anxious to get to his dinner. Recognizing No. 515 as one of the warden's messengers, the usher was constrained to forego the chance of a tip and turn over to him a likely-looking possibility of "graft." Needless to say, he did this merely because, in the affections of a hungry man, a prospective graft could not successfully compete with the smell of "chuck." The chuck was a sure thing, not a prospect, and when was even prison chuck in the dish, with the dish on the table, to be hazarded for two-bits or so in the bush, that might or might not materialize? Let somebody else waste perfectly good time showing people around during the dinner hour—especially when, if the "rubber-necks turned up any cush," the guide would have to divide with the thrifty convict usher who had put him "next." It was "heads I win, tails you lose," with the hungry one—for he didn't have to divide the chuck with anybody.

"Somebody t' see the warden, Bo," called the usher, "friends o' his'n, I reckon. Come an' git 'em —an' lead 'em to it."

No. 515 entered the building and ascending a short flight of stairs entered the central reception hall, where he was met by his fellow trusty.

"Say, Bo, dis plant looks good to me," said the convict. "Gee! If dey ain't de swell guys! Pipe de kyards wit de Fift' Av'noo monickers, will ye?"

He handed 515 a couple of genteel visiting cards.

"An' say, Cull," he continued, warmly, "youse oughter see de frail—she's a lu-lu, all right, all right —believe me! When youse lamps *her* you'll fall fer dat skoit sure. Dey is in de waitin' room. I wouldn't give youse a look in, only Doc. says I've got ter have me eats reg'lar."

No. 515 glanced at the cards and started down the steps. The other followed him to the top of the steps and said cunningly, in a stage whisper:

"If dey comes across wit de cush, we splits de purse, fifty fer de house an' fifty fer youse. I'm de house. See?"

"All right," rejoined 515, disgustedly, "I'll split it with you—if," he added, significantly, "they 'come across.'"

He went his way, cards in hand, and hastened towards the warden's office.

The warden still was standing by the window when No. 515 appeared at the door. The prisoner was about to knock, but noting that the Major saw him, raised his hand in salute instead.

"Come in, my man," the Major invited, with an answering salute.

The trusty approached the warden and proffered the cards.

"A lady and a gentleman to see you, sir."

"Ah, indeed!" returned the Major, listlessly, concealing a yawn—as he did all things that were undignified.

"Cards, eh?" he said, adding caustically to himself, "Not any of Bull Hennessy's select circle, that's a dead moral certainty."

Although this was not meant for the prisoner's ear, he caught the allusion to Hennessy. His jaw set viciously and there was an ominous glint of fire in his eyes that might have excited the warden's curiosity, had he not been languidly interested in the visiting cards.

The Major perfunctorily took the bits of pasteboard and glanced at them.

"Mr. Elisha Weatherson! Miss Weatherson!" he exclaimed, joyously. "Well, of all the unexpected people! Escort them here, at once."

"Yes, sir."

The trusty saluted and departed on his mission, and the warden turned back to the window and resumed his smoking.

"Well," he mused, "who ever expected 'Lishe Weatherson to visit me here. He's been stuck so tightly in that little old store in Ithaca for the last thirty years, that I didn't think dynamite could move him." He reverted to the cards in his hand. "His daughter is with him, too! Wonder what she is like—I haven't seen her since she went away to boarding-school, just after her mother died."

His glance followed the trusty as he crossed the yard and entered the building that constituted the gateway to the prison.

"If that man ever gets the right kind of jar to his pride," the Major gravely soliloquized, "he'll go through that stone wall, if he can't make it any other way—and I fancy it would be rather hazardous to get in his road."

No. 515 went into the visitor's reception hall and had no difficulty in locating the warden's friends. The two were standing by the open window, commenting on the smoothly-cut lawn and the luxuriant shrubbery and beds of flowers growing in front of the building, which were just beginning to bud under the gentle touch of spring.

The trusty patiently waited.

"Aren't they beautiful, papa?" she was saying. "How thoughtful the management is to put a bit of freshness and color into the lives of the poor unfortunates who are confined here. It must have a good influence upon them."

Mr. Weatherson was a matter-of-fact old fellow, and had about as much sentiment in his soul as has a wooden Indian, but his sense of humor was not similarly dwarfed. His eyes twinkled with merriment and he with difficulty repressed a hearty laugh at his daughter's ignorance of prisons.

"Well, little girl, I guess it was about time you took in a prison. You may need it in your business, when you write that book you are planning."

The young woman looked at her father with an expression of interrogation and mild astonishment.

"I surely shall, papa. That's what I came for. But I don't quite understand you."

"Why, don't you see, daughter dear, this is the front yard of the place. The back yard, like every other, looks different. These flowers and shrubs and green grass were put here for the double pur-

pose of making the warden's family—when he has one—feel at home, and giving to the visitors the same impression they gave you just now. You see, that bit of landscape gardening catches philanthropic visitors coming and going. They see a beautiful garden when they enter the prison and again when they leave. It gives a nice touch to their impressions and a pleasant tone to the stories they tell. It helps a lot, too, I suppose, with the folks who have friends here."

"But don't the convicts ever get a chance to see them? Are they never allowed to—"

Mr. Weatherson suddenly noticed the trusty standing near.

"Sh—h!" he cautioned.

"Pardon me, sir," said 515, courteously. "This is Mr. Weatherson, is it not?"

Mr. Weatherson looked his astonishment and the young woman turned squarely around and gazed at the man. The hall-mark of culture displayed by a convict was decidedly unexpected and came with a slight shock to the visitors.

"Yes, that is my name."

"The warden requested me to show you to his quarters, sir. Will you kindly follow me?"

The convict barely glanced at Miss Weatherson, and studiously avoided meeting her eye. He still could face men—even respectable ones—from the outer world, but a gentlewoman!—He had felt the awful humiliation and disgrace of his incarceration, but never so keenly as now on meeting a refined member of the gentler sex—his mother's sex—for which he always had entertained a sentiment and respect that verged on the chivalric.

With half-averted face the convict showed the

visitors into the reception hall and down the stairs into the jail-yard. As they reached the bottom stair, Miss Weatherson's foot caught in the hem of her skirt; she stumbled and would have fallen, had not the guide caught her.

"Thank you, sir," she said gratefully. "I was dreadfully awkward."

"Oh, no, Miss," he began, "an accident of that kind might happen to anyone who—"

Taken off his guard, his eyes met her's. Surprised into almost complete loss of self-control, he suddenly stopped and leaned for a moment against the frame of the outer door. The Weathersons preceded him into the yard. The young woman turned back with the intention of asking him a question. Noting this, by a powerful effort of will, he succeeded in recovering his self-possession and followed the visitors. His limbs still were barely under control, for he staggered a little.

"That way, sir," he indicated, his voice trembling with emotion.

The young woman looked at the trusty, at first curiously, and then with some concern. Turning to her father, she whispered:

"The poor fellow is ill."

The convict surmised that she had remarked upon his actions. He pulled himself together and affected a calmness which the expression of his white, haggard face emphatically denied.

Mr. Weatherson had heard of the "prison pallor," and shook his head in contradiction, as he sagely whispered:

"They all look like that."

It was not surprising that No. 515 should have been taken off his feet. Beside the photograph of

his mother, in the inner breast pocket of the garb of infamy that he wore, reposed a fragment of a leaf of an old magazine containing a picture of a beautiful young woman—the picture of Miss Weatherson!

Good God!" he murmured to himself, "And to think that I should meet her here! Thank heaven! She never knew me—and never will, unless I am a fool!"

He bit his lip, lacerating it; clenched his hands until his fingers ached and his nails painfully creased his palms; then shook his head resolutely as if to clear it of the vapors that were oppressing him, and with averted face resolutely strode on beside the warden's friends, answering as best he could their interested questions—asked mainly by the young woman.

But 515 answered laconically—almost to the point of brusqueness. He could not trust his voice.

Miss Weatherson again surreptitiously glanced at him, with an expression of lively curiosity tinged with commiseration. One might have fancied that she understood the situation, although she did not, in the least. There simply had arisen in her breast a little of the divine feminine instinct that impels every normal, decent woman to "mother" every bit of masculinity in the world that appeals to her as in the least worthy—or needing her pity. And how often her judgment errs as to who is worthy! Alas! how often, too, the maternal impulse—that primal instinct which cries out in the wilderness of life for the father of the child that Nature promised her when she herself was born—leads her feet into dangerous and forbidden paths!

The maternal desire, striving for expression in the gloom of the unattainable, has inspired the hu-

man dove to mate with the human hawk, the human barnyard fowl with the human eagle, the pure with the impure, the female "intellectual" with the clown, and the high with the low; it has made milady run away with the chauffeur—and the cook with milord! It was exemplified in Beauty and the Beast, and immortalized by Shakespeare in "Richard the Third" and "Midsummer Night's Dream." A fair maid fell for the songs and rhodomontade of Cyrano—and discounted his awful nose. The society belle turns her back on Apollo and runs away with a hunchback, or a man with a wooden leg. As for the cripple, or the acknowledged brute with a million!—Cupid wastes no time helping him; he can take care of himself.

Especially has the maternal instinct been responsible for the orchids and roses, sweet *billets doux* and heart-cry poetry sent by languishing ladies to caged criminals. It stands, in brief, for the feminine half of that simple yet most complex problem which puzzles Society's muddled head over its "yellow" morning paper and coffee; in the verbiage of the *hoi polloi* and the press—"affinity."

As to the masculine half of the affinity business, the less said the better. It is mighty accommodating, and spares no pains to join both its nobler and its baser impulses in aiding the softer sex in its efforts to see that the world "goes on just the same."

When woman learns to classify her emotions and ceases to permit the animal maternal yearning to masquerade as pity, sympathy, "spiritual" love and platonic friendship—that rotten bridge for the feet of fools!—she will become so discriminating and fastidious that some of the sterner and more selfish sex will live and die mateless.

But lovely woman is neither ultra-fastidious nor intelligently discriminating. She thinks she is—and of course will resent this—perhaps she one day may be, if we give her a fair chance to grow, but, all the same, she is not yet so. This, perhaps, is just as well, for if the call of the dream-child ever is too critically analyzed and controlled, there likely will be no flesh and blood children.

Meanwhile let this *blasé* old world laugh and gibe at the ill-balanced feminine creatures from the better walks of life, who make horrible *mésalliances*, or give maudlin pity and ill-advised attention to criminals, but if the instinct and emotions which lie behind their foolishness should pass away forever—well, this worn old world of ours indeed would soon be only a desolate mud-ball.

To the initiated, the bouquet of roses sent by a refined woman to a murderer is not quite so incomprehensible as it seems—no more so than the affection lavished by a childless woman upon her dog. And the poor souls are of the same kidney. There is more of pathos than of bathos in the lives of both.

And the rosy pink god, Puck-like, sits on the four-barred fence of ethics, morality, law and religion, with which that apotheosis of stupidity, Society, has surrounded itself, and laughs at the imbecility of man.

So shadowy was the touch of the world-old instinct on the heart and brain of Josephine Weatherson, that, at the first suggestion of such a thing, she would have shrunk away in horror from the poor devil of a convict as from a virulent and foul contagion, and yet, the curtain already was beginning

to rise on an old, old, serio-comedy—old, yet ever new!

In the prompter's box sat Dan Cupid, impatiently waiting for the players to begin. Dan was decidedly weary of it all, and thinking, "What's the use?" But he was grinning from one pink ear to the other, and anon cunningly laughing to himself.

Cupid caught a glimpse of the devil in the wings, anxiously waiting to see if he might bore into the cast.

"Nothing doing, 'Phisto!" cried Dan. "It's on the square—and besides," he chuckled, cynically, "this is a jail. Come around later."

Major Donaldson saw his friends and their convict guide enter the prison yard and come toward his quarters. He tossed his cigar into a convenient receptacle and hurried to the door to meet them. No. 515 ushered the visitors into the office, standing respectfully aside to let them pass, and then disappeared, to enter the dining hall a moment later.

"Well! Well! My dear Weatherson, where on earth did you come from, you old fossil?" cried the Major, heartily, grasping both of his friend's hands in his own and shaking them so vigorously that he winced.

"Ouch! You old ruffian! Straight from Albany. Went up to visit my sister last week. We thought we'd drop in on you and give you a surprise."

"You surely succeeded," said the Major, with another vigorous shake of Mr. Weatherson's hands, which gradually were growing purple.

"All right, then, Mr. Bear, just let go my hands, will you, and I'll introduce the lady."

"Quite unnecessary," exclaimed the Major, turning to the young woman.

"Our little Joe! A grown-up lady, too, and," he gallantly added, "a most beautiful and charming one. My, but you have—."

"Well—?" interrogated Miss Weatherson, archly.

"Eh? What—" he stared at her bewilderedly.

"Aren't you going to kiss me?" she pouted.

"Am I?" cried the Major, gleefully. "Just watch me!" and he gave her a hearty smack.

"Still my little Joe, eh?" he laughed. "Why, my dear, you have grown so big and so grand, that I was—"

"Afraid, eh?" she gibed, merrily. "And you've marched right up to the cannon's mouth, too."

"Which isn't half so dangerous as marching up to yours, you bewitching little heart-breaker!" roared the delighted Major.

"Martyr!" she retorted.

"No, my dear; not a martyr, but a discreet old gentleman, who has arrived at the age when he can see danger to young men, to which he himself is immune."

"Age or experience, Major?" she smilingly flashed.

"Both, my dear," he sighed. "Both."

"But, come," he said, "sit down and be like home folks. Tell me all about yourselves. How did you leave the folks in Ithaca? And, say, 'Lisha, what's going on up at Albany? Joe, my dear, you must tell me how *you* carried on at the capital. I suppose you have a belt full of scalps, eh?"

"Now, my dear Major!" protested Mr. Weatherson. "Those things will keep. We are not going to

sit down, even for a moment. We're up for the day, with your permission, and there'll be time enough to visit after your official labors are over. Meanwhile, we'll look about the prison a little. Josephine is going to combine business with pleasure, you know."

"Business?" queried the warden, turning to the young woman, wonderingly. "When did our little Joe launch into the business world—and what have we to offer you in the way of business? Looking for the position of matron, my dear?"

"Well, Major," she asked, mischievously "don't you think I could fill it acceptably?"

"Perhaps," he responded, cautiously, "but," and he laughed vociferously, "I don't think you could fill it as completely as it already is filled, my dear."

"I see," she pouted. "You are like papa. He doesn't think a woman has any head at all."

The Major laughed, as he recalled his collision with Mrs. Morgan that morning.

Miss Weatherson began to grow indignant.

"Pardon me, my dear," the warden explained, "I was not thinking of your intellect, which is obvious, but of the present incumbent's tonnage," and he related the comical adventure of the morning, much to the edification of his friends, and especially of Josephine, whose good nature immediately was restored.

"But as to the business in which Josephine is interested, Major," said the father. "She is doing some special up-lift stunts for a high-brow magazine, and is on the track of some—er, dope. She thinks that Sing Sing is a storehouse of literary treasures for her fell purposes."

"And so it is—so it is," agreed the Major. "There's muck enough here for a dozen rakers. Is that what *you* are up to, my dear—muck-raking?"

"Yes, and if you're not nice to me, I'll show you up, Mr. Warden," she retorted with a laugh.

"Ah, I see. If I don't behave, I'll be just so much muck for your rake. In lifting society up, you will rake the poor old Major down."

He held his hands above his head as if she had cried, "Stand and deliver!" and exclaimed in mock terror:

"Don't shoot—I'll surrender!"

"And now that you are my prisoner," she said, archly, "may I look around your old man-cage?"

"Certainly, my dear, and as you are out for novel experiences, I'll give you one. I'll have a convict—a trusty—show you around for a while. I'll take charge of you myself this afternoon. Don't make notes 'till then, for if I'm going to be muck-raked by you, my lovely little blue-stocking, I prefer to gather the dope myself. Nothing like being on the safe side, eh, 'Lishe?" He winked good-naturedly at Mr. Weatherson.

"Will you really have a prisoner show me around —and are you in earnest about this afternoon?" The young woman's eyes fairly danced with excitement.

"Of course, my dear."

"You sweet old thing, you! I've a notion to kiss you again for that!" She took a step toward the warden.

He raised his hand in protest and smilingly said, with mock gravity:

"Now, see here, young woman, I have a lot of work to do, but if you jolly me any more I'll cut that convict out of the program and attend to your entire entertainment myself."

"Oh, horrors!" she cried, in pretended alarm,

"what an awful threat! Please don't, Major, dear, I'll be good!"

The Major raised a warning finger.

"You'd better be good, you saucy little minx! Remember, I'm boss of this 'man-cage,' as you call it, and on a pinch—and without a pinch—I could put you in a dark cell on bread and water." He struck the call-bell on his desk.

"And please, Major, dear," she chaffed, "couldn't I have just one little piece of pie?"

"I should say not. I couldn't resist the temptation to Paris green that pie, Miss Muck-raker!"

He again rang the bell, a little impatiently. In answer to his second summons, Stubby shambled in, slouched into attention, and the Major proceeded to go through the usual routine of military salutation.

Now, Stubby was not a graceful figure at best. He never had been able to put up much of a military front, and the Major had almost given him up for a bad job. As he stood there furtively looking about, twisting his hideous cap in his hands and endeavoring to conform to the warden's ideas of military form, he suggested an organ-grinder's monkey that suddenly had assumed gigantic proportions.

Miss Weatherson grasped the situation at a glance. The contrast between the Major and the gorilla-like Stubby in their endeavors to conform to the most punctilious military etiquette, was almost too much for her self-control. She with difficulty refrained from laughing aloud.

The Major had not intended assigning to any particular trusty the duty of showing his friends about the prison, but when he saw Stubby going through his display of anthropoidal awkwardness in the one

thing of all others in which the old warrior took especial pride, he was taken decidedly aback. Without appearing to interest himself in the impression Stubby was making upon his friends, the warden noted that Miss Weatherson was being highly entertained. At this he was flustered almost to the point of losing his poise.

It was obvious that Stubby was a misfit in the plan of entertainment. Plainly No. 611 would not do at all. The Major concealed his confusion by putting on an extra-heavy mantle of dignity.

"My man," he said, "send 515 to this office at once.

Here Stubby completely forgot his lines.

"Surest t'ing ye know," he mumbled.

The convict then repeated his simian-like interpretation of military etiquette, and the Major, willy nilly, was compelled to answer the grotesque salutation—which performance very nearly wrecked his dignity beyond repair.

Miss Weatherson again succeeded in controlling her risibilities, but her face displayed a congestive color which suggested that she was in imminent danger of injuring her health by suppressing her emotions.

Stubby had a dim consciousness that he did not fit nicely into the general scheme of things that morning, and the young woman's presence did not greatly reassure him. He noticed what trouble she was having in preserving her gravity, and while he intuitively knew that the warden was as important a factor in the little burlesque as was he himself, he had an almost irresistible impulse to take to his legs and run away from the embarrassing situation. On leaving the room, therefore, he very

nearly sprinted, his monkey-like appearance being exaggerated by his extraordinary gait—a preposterous combination of stumble, shuffle and slide, that would have made his fortune on the stage.

When the convict reached the door, he stumbled and almost fell. As he went down the hall he sprinted in dead earnest—Stubby unmistakably was in a great hurry.

No. 515 promptly appeared and there was another exchange of military formalities. Miss Weatherson suddenly became interested in the view from the front windows and putting her handkerchief to her face, experienced a fit of coughing which, had Bull Hennessy witnessed it, undoubtedly would have interested that gentleman in his capacity of advance agent for Dr. Pull's Pulmonic Elixir.

The Major wrote a line upon a card and handed it to the prisoner.

"Show this lady and gentleman over the prison. The card will pass you everywhere," he said to his friends, adding significantly, and looking the prisoner through and through—"everywhere inside the gates. And now, Miss Weatherson, attention!"

The young woman struck a martial attitude, clicked her heels, came to attention and gave a very good imitation of a military salute.

"Captain Joe," continued the Major, responding with affected gravity to her salute, "you will report at my mess tent for dinner promptly at two o'clock. Bring your patient and long suffering orderly, Private Elisha Weatherson, with you. If you are willing to waive distinctions of rank, I have no objections to his dining with us."

"Your orders shall be obeyed, sir," and the young woman again saluted.

"Humph!" grunted her father; "I'm glad there's somebody who can make her mind." She smiled affectionately at him and gently pinched his cheek.

"How did you ever manage to break away from business, 'Lishe?" asked the Major, as the party moved toward the door.

Mr. Weatherson laughed, and flirted his finger in his daughter's direction.

"I didn't break away. She made me retire."

"Ah, I see. Joe, eh?" said the Major, amusedly. "There's something to be said in favor of petticoat government, after all."

The trusty politely stood aside to let the Weathersons pass, but did not squarely face them. The young woman, however, had recognized him when he first entered the office and, for some reason, which she herself hardly could have defined, she was glad that he again was to act as their escort.

The Weathersons passed out of the door, followed by their convict guide. Major Donaldson went to the window and stood gazing into the jail-yard, waiting for his friends to appear. As they emerged from the building he called to Miss Weatherson:

"Remember, Captain—two o'clock, sharp."

The young woman halted and saluted, then threw him a kiss.

"On the military dot, sir," she replied.

The Major bit off the end of a cigar, lit a match and stood abstractedly gazing after the party until the flame scorched his fingers. He dropped the blazing wood, swore under his breath, and relieved his feelings by throwing the cigar out of the window. This was distinctly contrary to the police regulations of the prison—which showed that the warden was in "a state of mind."

There was a shade of sadness on the warden's countenance as he repaired to his desk and seated himself in the chair of state. He rested his face on his hands and mused aloud:

"What's the use of anything? When youth is gone, all is gone. Fool that I was, to let mine drift into the ocean of years without realizing its worth! And now—

" 'Oh, give me, Lord, one hour of youth again!
For in that time I was sincere and bold,
And uncontaminate, and enraptured with
The Universe. I did not know the pangs
Of the proud mind, nor the sweet miseries
Of love; and never yet had gathered
After those fires, so sweet in burning, bitter
Handfuls of ashes . . . . . .' "

The Major seemed older than he was on entering the office that morning. There were lines in his face that were not there before.

" I almost hope that Bull Hennessy makes good —and gets my job," he sighed, as he picked up his pen and arranged his documents ready for work.

Chapter XX

THE AWAKENING

If the warden had desired deliberately to torture No. 515 he could not have selected a surer or more effective method than ordering him to escort the Weathersons on their tour of observation of the prison.

No system of torture ever devised equals the mental anguish suffered under certain conditions by persons of refined and sensitive nervous organization. Robert Parkyn, No. 515, indubitably was an individual of this kind. He had keenly suffered under the humiliation and disgrace of his trial and commitment for murder. His distress had been made especially poignant by the agony of his mother —agony that only loyal and loving mothers ever feel and which, since the world began, no man ever was affectionate, great, or useful enough to justify —with, perhaps, the single exception of Him who played the leading rôle in that awful tragedy enacted in the long ago on Calvary.

After the prison doors had closed upon him, and he had begun serving his unjust sentence, Parkyn found that there were still new and to him hitherto undiscovered regions in the Valley of Sorrows.

Anticipation of joy has a livelier zest for the mental palate than does its realization. We borrow pleasurable thrills in advance, and find our supply deplet-

ed when it should be most abundant. The evergreen hills of happiness are seen through the mystic haze that distance gives to the pictures which imagination paints on the horizon of hope. Not so with our prospective griefs, and pains, and sorrows. Anticipation never takes the edge off these; it merely makes them keener when they arrive.

No imagination is so vivid that it can in prospective do full justice to the agony experienced from the loss of liberty by one to whom life in the free outer world means something.

To the professional criminal, whose sensibilities often are of a low order from birth and still further blunted by the vicissitudes of his environment, neither the dread nor the realization of incarceration in a penal institution is as keen as some people suppose. To him, detection and imprisonment are only mal-adventures inseparable from his business—merely part of the day's work. He knows that he must of necessity lead an in-and-out-of-prison life. The relative proportions of "in" and "out" depend upon his cleverness, plus the influence of politics and of luck—that good fairy who is quite as potent in the affairs of evil men as she is in those of the just, good and upright.

The confirmed criminal has more lusts than loves, and no home ties, for life in and out of jail is not conducive to domesticity of tastes, habits, or even opportunities. Wives and children may be merely bait for traps set to catch the human foxes, rats, wolves and tigers of the underworld, so the "wise guy" of gang-land will have none of them. Your wise crook is even careful not to get too deeply into the bird-lime of love, in that pseudo-domestic life

where reigns the "moll." As a certain "gent" expressed it in the argot of gang-land:

"If de crooks wuzn't turned up by de frails, an' nobody never snitched, dere'd be nuttin' to it—just nuttin' to it. De fly-cops 'd lose dere reputashuns, an' be put ter drivin' teams an' ice wagons, an' half o' dem harness bulls 'd have ter sweep crossins', while de udder half o' dem big stiffs wuz guardin' 'em."

So, even a steady moll really is a luxury that spells danger for the criminal, although it must be acknowledged that he is more secure when the "frail" really is of the underworld and to the manner born. The female professional thief or prostitute is a safer consort for the male crook than is the woman who is either innocent or merely an onlooker in the world of crime.

The professional criminal has no pride—except a purely professional one—to wound by sending him to prison. The upper-world on which the underworld preys can think no less of a thief because of the advertisement he receives in the yellow press. War ever prevails between the two social strata and no quarter is asked by either. The opinions of one another entertained by the denizens of gang-land and those of upper Fifth Avenue are mutually uncomplimentary and disrespectful, and any blow which the one may deal the other does not change the opinion one whit, for better or worse.

Supposing the crook is sent to prison—has he cause for shame in what is merely a business reverse? Even if he did have cause, would he have the capacity of appreciation of his humiliation? And so for your true criminal the "stir" has its inconveniences, but no disgrace. He may meet in

prison brutality, cruel and unusual punishment, injustice and all that—but when he gets out of stir he can look his own world straight in the eye. He knows that he will be welcomed back to the underworld as a hapless soldier of fortune—a hero, nevertheless, who temporarily has been "down on his luck." He sometimes fears the gang will give him "de merry ha! ha!" for getting "collared," but this is the worst, and will be forgotten in the lustre of a new and more gloriously ending job.

Should the professional criminal commit murder, whether he expiates the crime or not, then indeed, is he crowned with the laurel and the bays of gangland! The more notches he has on the butt of his "gatt," the greater his prestige and the more effulgently brilliant the halo of glory with which the gang invests his heroic head!

When Robert Parkyn entered Sing Sing, he was suffering the tortures of a mental hell, but compared with what was to come this was pure joy. If the prison degradation and misery, and the arduous labor of the stone-yard had not dulled his sensibilities, bringing in their train a certain degree of apathy and a fatalistic acceptation of the inevitable, he must have gone mad—as had many before him. When he became a trusty he began to shake off his indifference and to hope—vaguely, it is true, but nevertheless to hope.

The revelation that Stubby had made to him, followed, as it was, by meeting Miss Weatherson and recognizing in her the original of the picture which, with the idealistic impressionism of youth, he had so long worn close to his heart, not only brought him back to his own manly self, but transformed him

into a new and more dynamic being, one in whose heart and brain seethed hot desire for liberty and, naturally enough, for revenge—the most consuming of all passions. And now came this pseudo-companionship with the girl of his dreams!

As No. 515 was escorting the Major's guests to the various places of interest about the prison, he was compelled, despite himself, to converse with them. Both father and daughter instinctively realized that their guide was not of the class that constituted the majority of the prison population, and were careful to avoid comment and questions that possibly might wound his sensibilities or lead him to suspect that they entertained any curiosity regarding his own history. The daughter, in particular, was not only extremely punctilious in avoiding all reference or inquiry regarding his personal affairs, but was as affable as she was considerate. She plainly showed, moreover, that she found their courteous and intelligent escort more than ordinarily interesting. That he was refined, well-bred and an educated man was self-evident.

The young woman's delicate avoidance of topics which might distress, or at least embarrass, her convict guide, was the more commendable because of the fact that she was making considerable sacrifice in so doing, for she had the curiosity common to her sex, and plainly also, was becoming interested in him.

"Poor fellow!" she thought, "For a man of his intelligence and refinement to be shut up in this frightful prison, away from the world in which he probably had an important part to play, is an awful tragedy."

"Miss Weatherson was—well, she was a woman—

hence it was not astonishing that she should have noticed the fine features and dark eyes of the convict guide. She also noted that he was of splendid stature and that his figure, which even the miserable prison garb of the trusty could not quite conceal, was magnificently proportioned and as erect as that of a soldier. He showed the athlete in every line and movement.

Dan Cupid, still in the prompter's box, noticing that the young woman was becoming critical, whistled to the devil, who still was peeping out from the wings, awaiting his cue, and cried:

"Nothing doing for you, Cloven Hoof, but you did well to stick around a while. The play begins to look interesting, and you might be glad to know what the real thing is like."

And as the young woman looked at the prisoner she wondered what grim tragedy lay behind that number—515. Somehow, she instinctively rebelled at the thought that this man could have committed a crime which justified his presence here. How could such a man have been even touched, were it ever so lightly, by the mantle of disgrace? She would ask the Major about him at dinner. The unfortunate fellow was not, she felt sure, and never could have been, a part of that under-world which she, like every other well-bred woman, had seen only as through a glass smoked by conventionality, and which she only recently ever had endeavored to comprehend as part of the great problem of humanity—a problem that it was her duty to understand, if she would be of social service.

The young man must have come from refined surroundings; he could not always have been *de classé* —of this she was quite convinced. His world and

her's could not have been so very far apart out yonder, beyond that grey forbidding wall.

In fancy she could see his mother—a woman of her own class, she felt quite certain—grey-haired, bowed with grief and shame by the fate of her boy. Or did the mother know? She hoped that the poor thing did not know.

And his sister—or did he have a sister? If so, how that sister must have felt when she heard of her brother's downfall! How wretched both mother and sister now must feel, as the consciousness of the emptiness of their wrecked, unhappy lives was borne in upon them, day by day, by his absence and the knowledge that he would not come until—How long, she wondered, was his sentence?

What must he himself have felt when the grim, ponderous gates of Sing Sing closed upon him! How cruel it must have been to lose that outer world which always has meant so much to men like him—strong, intelligent, handsome and ambitious men. She was confident that he had been ambitious—and proud! She quite understood his averted eyes and the almost monosyllabic answers to her questions that he gave when he was not off guard. As she thought of all these things a great wave of pity swept over her, and tears almost sprang to her eyes.

When a woman really pities a man, even one who is quite impossible, she is on thin ice. Unconscious of its meaning she may be, but there always is a touch of that mysterious under-thrill that is more than pity, and which, when the fates so decree, grows into something that has irresistibly drawn the sexes together, in jail or out, since the earth was new.

No. 515, with face averted so far as might be, battled with the most disturbing emotions that ever beset any man. Miss Weatherson typified the only ideal of womankind, save his own mother, that ever had entered his life, even in the slightest degree, and more, she typified the world, the beautiful world that he had left behind. She stood for what rightfully was his. She was a mirror, in which was reflected his own youth, the youth that was buried in that awful prison. In her he saw his dreams of fame, of love, of home, and of children. In her he saw all that might have been, and all that still might be, if only—!

There are no supreme moments in the lives of the commonplace. Neither their joys nor their sorrows, ever quite reach the heights. There is a law of compensation in human life, and when the emotion meter that nature implanted in the breast of man, and which nestles close to his very soul, registers too high, she has a trick of knocking it the other way. Perhaps it is better so, for what could be juster than rendering unto Cæsar those things which are Cæsar's?

The supreme moment of Robert Parkyn's life now was very near. He was destined to live his life, not as he had originally planned, still less as Boss Hennessy had planned. The fates one day would be very kind to him. He would marry and have children, and it was written in the Book of Fate that he would live to hear the prattle of his children's children; he again would be a man among men, and mingle with the respectable, even with the rich and famous sons of earth, as upon equal terms, but never again would he have a moment of

ecstasy quite like that which soon would be his—and he did not know!

He knew nothing, save that his very brain was on fire. He had no thought, no impulse, save to get away—to make a break for liberty and all those wonderful and beautiful things that lay just beyond those grey, frowning walls of insensate stone—things which he never half appreciated until he was cast within those walls, and never fully appreciated until now. His life might be forfeited, but men had died by thousands for less, far less than the things that lay in the land of his heart's desire, just beyond that cruel barrier which was so jealously guarded by those ruffians in the sentry boxes.

They were passing the large gate through which the supply wagons were wont to pass. No. 515 saw that it was open! Opportunity knocked loudly at his door, and an irresistible flood of desire swept over him. Weird, inconstant lights flickered before his vision. He turned, gazed at Miss Weatherson for a second with an expression that startled her with its fierce intensity, and then madly tore through the gate, upsetting one of the guards on the way.

Immediately outside were several men, who evidently had just passed out by the gate. They heard the startled cry of the guards and turned inquiringly. Instantly grasping the situation, they attempted to block the fleeing convict's way. One man, larger and more powerful than the rest, stepped directly in front of him and grasped him by the shoulder.

The recognition was as brief as it was mutual—and most disastrous to one of the parties. Boss Hennessy went down like a pole-axed ox, under a

crushing blow from some object which the escaping prisoner had taken out of his pocket as he ran!

The supreme moment of Robert Parkyn's life was then! Never again would he experience such delight as he felt when, impelled by his powerful, scientific hand, the warden's paper-weight crushed against Bull Hennessy's thick skull. The sensation of the impact of the weapon against his enemy's head, and the quick sinking of the ruffian's body, under the blow, gave the fleeing man the most joyous thrill that he ever had experienced—or ever would.

Bowling over several men with his powerful fists, and hurling another upon his face in the dust and gravel of the roadway, the fugitive raced like a marathon runner for the river, amid a hail of bullets from every official that was within range—or who thought he was!

Miss Weatherson sank, half-fainting, into her father's arms.

Chapter XXI

THE GET AWAY

When Duryea returned to the warden's office he found Major Donaldson standing by the front window, smoking and gazing pensively towards the mountains. The Major blew the clouds of fragrant smoke towards the open window, where they lazily floated in the warm air for a moment, and then were dissipated, like the unsubstantial things they were, by the soft, warm breeze that was gently blowing up-river.

The door was open and the young man entered without knocking. He saw by the clock that he was in for a call-down, if the warden was not in a pleasant mood, for the secretary had been away for a longer time than even good-nature should have been expected to overlook without protest, and the fact that he had found McCabe more than usually interesting would not have been accepted as a reasonable excuse for his remissness.

The chief deputy and he had wrangled over the warden's pet theories and peculiar methods until both men were on edge and ready to fight a buzz-saw, if necessary to support their arguments. They finally compromised on the consideration of some of the Major's good qualities—which even the chief deputy was willing to concede—only to begin all over again. McCabe forgot his dinner for the time

being—which was bad, and the secretary forgot the duties of his office—which was worse. As Duryea ate with the Major, who liked both a late dinner and company, he took a rather unfair advantage of McCabe.

When the two parted, the subjects over which they wrangled still were unsettled. Like the immortal Omar, each had "heard great argument about it and about," yet had come out the same door wherein he went.

The chief deputy still opposed the warden's "dippy" ideas, although he admitted that the Major had redeeming qualities of mind which likely would save him from going completely "nutty." McCabe further deposed that the Major had a good heart, which was leavening for the lump of his monstrously fallacious theories and still more egeregiously mistaken practices.

Duryea, as usual, contended that the Major's ideas were logical, and his methods as sound as his heart was warm and his ideals high.

The secretary had had a Christian upbringing, but he plainly demonstated that, while he still had faith in a Supreme Being, he suspected it was a mistake that Major Donaldson had not been given charge of the universe at the very beginning of things—which was not irreverence, but merely an appreciation.

It is possible that no compromise between McCabe and Duryea ever would have been possible had there not been a common ground of adverse criticism of the Major. Both men had found a bit irksome the strict military etiquette that he had established. Even this cause of complaint, however, was facetiously treated by Duryea, whilst McCabe, although he

growled a good deal at the "damn nonsense" of it all, set it down as the least objectionable of the various phases of the old soldier's mental squint.

As the warden apparently did not notice his secretary's entrance, Duryea discreetly coughed slightly to announce his arrival. He was rather pleased than otherwise that the Major did not hear this signal. He rather dreaded the call-down that was due him for the second time that day, and, like a criminal under capital sentence, he welcomed delay. None of us likes to face disagreeable things—we all stave off the issue as long as we possibly can.

"Well," he thought, as he went to his desk and quietly seated himself, "this will help some. If the dear old Major had about-faced when I gave him the high sign, I'd have had to go through the usual motions. He'd have starched me stiff with military etiquette, and then turned the hose on me and washed it out. 'Half a loaf is better than no loaf' when a loafer has a roast coming to him.

"Humph!" muttered the young fellow to himself, as he glanced at the desk. "The warden has plenty more work laid out for me. Wonder where he dug it all up."—and he dove into the papers, meanwhile rattling them prodigiously.

"That you, Duryea?" inquired the Major, finally awaking from his revery, but without turning around, and still gazing out of the window.

Y—yes, sir," the secretary ventured, mentally bracing himself for the anticipated squall.

But the storm did not come. The Major went on with his day dreams. Presently he observed, smilingly:

"Do you know what I was thinking of, Howard?"

"Haven't the least idea, sir," replied Duryea, cheerfully, his spirits beginning to rise. "Something about prison reform methods, perhaps."

"Yes and no," responded the Major, slowly. "I was thinking of a legend I once heard, of an old sagamore of the Iroquois!

"He was a wise old man, who, like the chief in the Last of the Mohicans, had seen too much, had dreamed dreams—and had lived too long.

"The venerable sagamore had a magic calumet, that he used to smoke as the evening shadows fell.

"One of the young braves was wont to sit at the sagamore's feet and gather the pearls of the old man's wisdom. Noticing that he blew the smoke of the calumet in fragrant billows always toward the west, the young warrior marveled.

" 'Why, O father,' he asked, 'dost thou not blow the smoke of the kilikinnic toward the east? Why ever toward the west?'

" 'Because I see visions in the smoke-clouds, and I like not those that I see in the east. There I see only the fire and the smoke and grime of the white man's lodges, and the thunder and lightning of his war canoes. I see not one redman. In the west I see nations of redmen, moving, ever moving, toward the caverns where sinks the setting sun.' "

The Major blew a great cloud of smoke from his havana through the steel lattice of the window, and watched it as it slowly floated away down the prison yard.

"Beautiful legend, isn't it, Howard?"

"Indeed it is, sir," responded the secretary, enthusiastically. He made no further comment—he was enjoying the warden's mood too much to risk

side-tracking him—and the Major continued his sentimentalizing.

"Well, that beautiful legend came to my mind as I stood here smoking. Like the old sagamore, I do not fancy the visions I see in the east."

He turned and pointed towards the windows that opened on the rear of the prison yard, through which Duryea could see part of the various dreary-looking buildings that were enclosed within the walls, and plunged into one of his homilies.

"There I see the machinery of the old hide-bound social régime, that has marched relentlessy on, robbing its human misfits of their liberty or shedding their blood, as if it were the strong man's duty to discipline his weaker brother for the evils God has thrust upon him. It has been and is a reign of cruelty and ignorance, in which the dominant idea has been to punish the victims of God's handiwork for the mistakes of their Creator, who, if He but willed, merely by a wave of His hand, in the minutest fraction of a second, could set things right.—And," he went on, "mankind never has been able to see the absurdity of trying to render justice to Society by inflicting injustice on the individual victim of its own sins.

"When I look yonder, toward the west," he said, waving his hand toward the opposite bank of the river, "I see both nature and man at their best.

"Over there are some of man's concessions to beauty and near-improvements on nature—those beautiful villas and picturesque farm houses. There, too, are the river, the green everlasting hills and the turquoise blue of the sky, that call me sometimes, almost irresistibly, away from the sordid, miserable wreckage that man has made of man, back to things

primitive, where even the humblest of nature's works is beautiful.

"Did it ever occur to you, my boy, that all of the real blots on this dear old mud-and-green world of ours have been made by man?"

The Major did not wait for an answer.

"I wonder," he mused, reflectively, "just what man would do if he could play his part all over again. He'd be as selfish and cruel as ever, I fear. I think I know what the Creator would do, if He were to do His own work all over from the beginning. He'd leave man entirely out of His scheme of things."

The secretary listened with rapt attention to his chief's homily, but smiled a little at his decided pessimism.

"Listen to that!" exclaimed the warden.

From the jail-yard came the sound of hundreds of shuffling, scraping feet, plodding their spiritless way along the stone and gravel walks.

The Major went to a rear window overlooking the yard, and motioned to Duryea to join him. The shuffling, shambling lines of leaden-faced prisoners were slowly filing at lock-step from the dining hall on the way back to the cells, from which shortly they again would be driven forth in hideous, crop-haired, striped lines to the stone-yard and the various workshops to resume their rôles of beasts of burden and of toil.

"See," said the warden, "how ingenious we are in devising means to defeat our own ends! There is not a single prison custom which has not been stamped on the minds and hearts of those poor devils that has not made them worse, instead of better. Our prison system pours them all into the same

mould—stamps them with the same hall mark. The hardened offender, the new beginner—the incurable and the curable—all are reduced to the same degraded level. The State immures them here in this hell-hole instead of working them on farms and roads in the open, where they not only could pay their own way, but be physically rejuvenated.

"Do you see that boy near the end of the line nearest us?" interrogated the Major, sadly. "Well, that case alone is enough to damn any social system that would permit him to be here."

"Poor little chap!" Duryea exclaimed, with lively interest. "I've noticed him several times before. He's a new arrival, I think. I've wondered what he was in for, and had intended to look up his record, but forgot it. One of the guards said the lad was in for murder, but what the guards don't know about prisoners would fill those cabinets of ours several times over."

"Well," said the Major, ironically, "for once a guard was right. That child entered the institution a few days ago, to begin a life sentence for murder!"

"Great God! Major, you don't mean to say that that young lad really did commit a murder!"

"Unfortunately, yes," replied the Major, gravely. "He became involved in a quarrel over a bad woman—the lowest of the low. The boy was crazy drunk, and probably had a very hazy consciousness of what he was doing. And they punished the wrong man!"

"The wrong man, Major?"

"Yes, the wrong man—the fellow who sold him the whiskey still is at large. Incidentally no one has gone gunning for the authorities who issued the real murderer's license, nor started a crusade for

the protection of boys from the Scarlet Sisterhood."

"Can't you make a trusty of him, sir?"

"He will assume his duties as doorkeeper in the hospital tomorrow," rejoined the warden, quietly.

"There are men in that line," he went on, gloomily, "who have children and who, when they are set free, will breed more children, that will have criminality in their veins the day they are born. The State does nothing to prevent the birth of such social misfits, nor to save them once they *are* born. The grey-haired man just behind that lad is a lifer, who was sent up for murder from our own home town. He left a decent wife and six beautiful children behind him. The State is doing nothing to insure their safety, but it has cells ready for them here if they go wrong.

"Howard, my boy, that hideous, creeping, shuffling, many-jointed line of prisoners is devouring my respect for my fellow-man. What is more, it is getting on my nerves."

One of the prisoners stumbled and was forced out of alignment. A guard sprang at him and roughly grasped him by the shoulder, violently pushing him back into place. Had not one of his fellow-convicts caught him, he would have fallen on his face upon the flagging.

"Damn you, No. 10!—close up there!" bellowed the guard, ferociously. "What in hell are ye tryin' to do, you infernal lobster? I'll knock yer ugly block off, if ye're not damned careful!"

"Oh, will you?" growled the warden to himself. "We shall see about that, my friend."

He turned to his secretary and said, quietly: "Mr. Duryea, see that Sullivan reports to me tomorrow morning. I wish formally to take up with him the

matter of knocking the 'blocks' off our prisoners. Possibly, also, I may have something to say about his language.

"What can one man alone accomplish against a system like that?" the Major resumed, sighing hopelessly. "I may succeed in pounding some sense and common decency into that guard, but that will be only a drop of reform in the ocean of misery that has submerged Society's dregs.

"That file of prisoners," he went on, moodily, "is only one among thousands upon thousands of similar striped monsters that are gnawing at Society's very heart."

The prisoners shuffled on, the two men watching with thoughtful eyes the long files of unfortunates. As the last of the convicts were entering the cell-houses the warden turned away disgustedly.

"What an awful tragedy!" he exclaimed. "When will Society quit piling Pelion upon Ossa, heaping mountains of degradation on those who already are degraded and burying them so deep that they never can rise while the world lasts? When will Society try to make men better instead of worse? When will—"

There was a sudden commotion in the jail-yard.

"Halt! Stop him!" cried several voices.

Two shots rang out!

The guards in the rear of the file of prisoners quickly hustled them into the cell-houses. Other guards were seen running madly towards the gate at the farther end of the jail enclosure, used for receiving supplies and the passage of wagons loaded with goods manufactured in the various departments of the prison. Several sentries sped along the top of the wall in the same direction. When they arrived

in the vicinity of the gate they began pumping lead as rapidly as they could fill chamber and pull trigger, evidently at some target in the direction of the river.

Major Donaldson and Duryea looked in the direction of the disturbance. As they did so, they heard a fusillade of shots outside the prison in the direction in which the sentries had fired, and saw McCabe and a number of guards running swiftly towards the scene of the commotion.

The sound grew fainter and fainter, and finally, with what was distinctly a volley, somewhere along the river, abruptly ceased.

"Another poor devil breaking jail!" exclaimed the Major, grimly; "another case for the hospital—or the morgue—with more trouble for yours truly."

The two men were about to rush for their hats, with the intention of going out to investigate, when Duryea exclaimed:

"Look, Major, here comes McCabe! A lady and a gentleman are with him!"

The Major at once recognized his friends, the Weathersons. They were greatly agitated and Mr. Weatherson was supporting his daughter, who appeared to be leaning heavily on his arm.

"What the deuce!" exclaimed the astonished warden, "Howard, go and meet them and escort them here immediately! Where is that trusty, I wonder?"

The secretary obeyed and a moment later the Weathersons entered, followed closely by Duryea, McCabe shamefacedly bringing up the rear.

Mr. Weatherson was endeavoring to calm his daughter.

"What on earth has happened to you, 'Lishe?" asked the warden.

Mr. Weatherson put one arm around his daughter's waist and with the other gently patted her cheek.

"Major," he said, calmly, "I'm afraid we're in for a blowing up. We've lost a perfectly good guide."

"What! Lost your guide? Was that—?"

"Your 'trusty'? Yes," replied his friend, dryly, "He didn't seem to like our company."

"What's up, McCabe?" inquired the Major, anxiously.

The chief deputy warden nervously mopped his face with his handkerchief.

"A—a prisoner escaped, sir, a trusty—No. 515. He—he was showin' this lady an' gentleman around, an' when they passed the gate he made a break an' ——an'——well, he got away!"

"How did that gate happen to be open at this time of day, McCabe?" demanded the warden, sternly.

"One o' the guards had just opened it to let Mr. Hennessy an' a couple o' his friends pass through, sir. Mr. Hennessy didn't want to go clear back to the main entrance, an'—"

"Oh, I see!" interjected the Major, sarcastically. "If Mr. Bull Hennessy wants anything, he's just got to have it—and no questions asked. I trust that the guard saved the gate."

McCabe looked bewildered.

"Go on," commanded the Major, gloomily.

"Ye see, sir," continued McCabe, "as No. 515 was a trusty, an' was showin' your friends around, nobody suspected that he'd try to pull off a getaway. The guard was taken by surprise, sir."

"Evidently," said the warden, satirically. "Did you round up the prisoner?"

"W—why, n—no, not exactly," stammered the now throughly demoralized chief deputy. "Ye see, sir, the guard at the gate fired—"

"That guard shot twice at the poor man!" flashed Miss Weatherson, indignantly, her eyes blazing with resentment. "He ought to be flogged—the brute! Why do you have such men about you, Major Donaldson?"

The Major was too seriously preoccupied to reply.

"He was hit, sir," McCabe went on, with a show of assurance, "but that didn't stop him. One o' the guards missed him clean, but' I'm sure the other winged him. The sentries took half a dozen pot shots at him, too. He ran like a deer, with one arm a-floppin'; he doubled behind some sheds down by the river, an' jumped inter the water before the guards could get anywhere near him.

"We all took a crack at him in the water," he continued, defensively, "an' I'm bettin' we got him, all right; for when we come to the bank he'd sunk out o' sight, an' there was quite a lot o' blood in the water where he went down."

Miss Weatherson could hardly contain herself while McCabe was telling his grewsome story. Her eyes shot baleful lightnings at him, and if fiery glances had been bullets, the luckless chief deputy would have been riddled, then and there.

As the official ended his recital, the young woman, with accusing finger, sprang towards him furiously,

"Murderer!" she cried.

Her father interposed and putting his arm around her waist endeavored to calm her.

"Ss—sh!" he whispered. "You mustn't forget yourself, dear."

"I am not so sure that you got him, Mr. McCabe," asserted the warden, with the evident object of mollifying the young woman. "He's a pretty smart sort of a chap, and may have played 'possum."

"Don't you ever believe it, sir," confidently replied the obtuse McCabe. "Why, I got a bead on him myself! An' I'll bet I—"

His eye met the blaze in Miss Weatherson's, and he checked himself just in time.

"Well, anyway," continued the still blundering McCabe, "bein' smart don't help a feller much when one wing is busted an' his lungs is chock full o' old Hudson. Oxygen's worth more'n brains, when ye're under water.

"An'—an' there's—there's somethin' else I've got to tell ye, sir," he went on, apprehensively, "Mr. Hennessy got in the prisoner's way—tried ter stop him, sir—an'—an' the feller cracked his head fer him."

"Well, here's where I pack *my* trunk!" said the warden to himself. "Hennessy might stand for the calling down I gave him, but never for a cracked head."

"We sent him ter the hospital, sir," McCabe remarked in conclusion.

"Served him good and right!" said Miss Weatherson, spunkily, her face lighting up with real satisfaction. "He's not a prison official!"

"Come, come, dear!" whispered the father. "Neither are you."

"So Hennessy is in the hospital, eh?" remarked the Major, imperturbably. "That's bad, very bad! That prisoner certainly was rather careless in his conduct. What did he hit the Boss with, and how did he get possession of the weapon?"

"With this, sir. He must ha' took it from your desk."

McCabe drew from his pocket the paper-weight which the escaping prisoner had wielded so effectively, and gave it to the warden.

For a second the Major looked at the article in blank astonishment.

"My paper-weight!" he exclaimed. "Well, it seems that I'm an accessory after the fact. A Christmas present, too.

"Is the Boss seriously hurt, McCabe?" he queried, as he reflectively balanced the weight in his hand.

"The doctor says he had a narrow escape, sir, but his skull ain't fractured, an' he'll be all right tomorrow."

The Major looked at the paper-weight, still balancing it in his hand, and remarked, abstractedly:

"How flimsy all this Christmas stuff is!"

"Shall I get out the dogs, sir?" asked McCabe.

"No, we might get 'em wet," said the Major, as he carelessly tossed the paper-weight upon the desk. "Dogs cost money, McCabe. Have the river patrolled, and the usual dispatches sent to the police—and let it go at that."

McCabe perceptibly was getting wabbly.

"B—but, shan't we drag the river, sir; we might —"

"No," answered the Major, interrupting the chief deputy by an impatient wave of the hand. "Everybody knows we're good shots. Nobody will question what probably happened."

McCabe shrewdly drew the conclusion that the warden did not want the man-hunt continued or the river dragged for the body, simply because, if the

search proved unsuccessful, these measures would be a tacit admission of doubt as to the final escape of the prisoner. This, he thought, obviously was a slight sop to the Cerberus of criticism. Then, too, he believed that a long-continued man-hunt would be an advertisement for the management of Sing Sing which the warden and his subordinates could ill afford. McCabe, therefore, was rather relieved by his superior's stand-pat attitude.

The chief deputy warden was only partially correct in his conclusions. The Major's motive for letting well-enough alone escaped him. The method of the Major's design was as McCabe cunningly surmised. The beneficiary that the old soldier had in mind was, however, not his own administration, but the late—or at least now somewhat problematic—No. 515.

Feeling that the situation was tolerably safe, McCabe smiled inwardly, saluted the Major and was about to make his departure.

"Oh, by the way, Mr. McCabe," said the warden, picking up the paper-weight.

The chief deputy halted and saluted.

"Yes, sir."

The Major proffered him the paper-weight, which he took mechanically, glancing bewilderedly first at the paper-weight and then at his chief, and dubiously shaking his head.

"Have that useful article silver-mounted for me at your earliest convenience, McCabe," said the Major, with the suave smile and the politely satirical inflection of which he was master. "When it is done, deliver it at my private quarters. I wish to keep it where it will not be dangerous to good citizens. We can ill afford to lose such distinguished men as Mr. Hennessy."

McCabe, with mouth agape, stood looking alternately at the Major and the weight, until the warden impatiently waved his hand as an indication that his subordinate would better be on his way. As he went slowly toward the door, gazing at the paperweight with a puzzled air and muttering to himself, the warden called after him:

"Say, McCabe, don't mind expense! Have it charged to my personal account, not to the state. I pay for my own luxuries and pleasures."

Miss Weatherson had listened with rapt interest to the dialogue between the warden and the chief deputy. She was not sufficiently worldly-wise to analyze either the Major's motives or his methods, but she was overjoyed when she found that there was to be no further pursuit of the fleeing convict. Deep down in her breast she did not believe the man was dead. This belief was not founded upon any logicality of deduction—she just did not believe it, that was all. That the wish was father to the thought goes without the saying, and no one, probably, will quarrel with the view that her conclusion was born of the intuition which descended to her from the Countess Eve, who doubtless herself had acquired intuition several hours before she arrived at the dignity of fig-leaves. The fact that in the case of Eve's daughters intuition and fig-leaves of various styles and patterns ever since have been most intimately associated, has, of course, no bearing on the events of this story.

The chief deputy warden's story had inspired Josephine Weatherson with horror and disgust, yet these sentiments were so tempered with joy by the thought that, after all, the unfortunate prisoner

might have escaped, that the shock she experienced from listening to the deputy warden's brutal recital now was made endurable.

"The poor fellow! I hope he got away!" she exclaimed tearfully, as McCabe disappeared through the door.

"What! A murderer!" exclaimed the Major, "And you hope he got away?"

"That man a murderer!" she indignantly protested. "I don't believe it!"

"See here, my dear girl!" expostulated the warden, "you are dangerously near contempt of court. The fellow was found guilty."

"Well, all the same, I don't believe the poor young man *was* guilty, and I hope more than ever that he fooled those beastly guards! So there, now!"

There was an odd expression in the old soldier's eyes, as he turned to his secretary.

"Mr. Duryea," he said, "kindly close that door."

"And now, young woman," he commanded, with mock gravity and a pretense of *brusquerie*, "kindly repeat what you said just now."

"Indeed I will!" she flashed defiantly. "I said I hoped that convict got away!"

The Major stepped closer to her and caught the lobe of one pink ear between his finger and thumb.

"So do I, my dear," he whispered, so loudly that his wisdom in ordering his secretary to shut the door became evident.

"Bully!" exclaimed Duryea, clapping his hands in glee.

Miss Weatherson actually bubbled over with delight, as she rushed for the warden.

"Now I *will* kiss you, you lovable old bear, you!"

She threw her arms around his neck and gave him several resounding kisses that made poor Duryea's mouth water. Indeed, the young man felt for the moment that youth had no privileges which ever need excite the envy of the dear old man.

Major Donaldson, gasping for breath and extremely fussed, but delighted even unto the seventh heaven, disengaged himself and sputtered:

"Order in the court! Order, I say!"

He pounded vigorously on the desk, whilst he was collecting the remnants of his badly shattered official dignity.

Duryea, resting first on one leg and then upon the other, stood ostentatiously looking at the ceiling. He finally, discreetly, but it must be admitted, pointedly, coughed behind his hand.

The warden looked up with a start and glanced inquiringly at his secretary. His kindly eyes twinkled with comprehension, and amusement at the perennial "freshness" and assurance of youth, which never was and never can be subordinated by or to, anything or anybody.

"Oh! I beg pardon, Howard.—Miss Weatherson, permit me to present my secretary, Mr. Duryea."

The Major dabbed his brow and face with his handkerchief and heaved a deep sigh.

"You will excuse my inadvertence, won't you," he said, with his characteristic courtesy. "I—well, I'm getting old, I guess, and—and I've had a rather strenuous morning, and—and you understand, I'm quite sure."

With affectionate emotion they could not quite conceal, and of which they were unashamed, Duryea and the Weathersons assured the grand old man that they quite "understood."

"Come," said the Major, gayly, glancing at the time and now quite sure of himself; "let's go to mess."

BOOK III

Chapter XXII

THE ARGONAUT

The stage line from Bismarck to Deadwood, Dakota, in the late "seventies," was a cosmopolitan "common carrier." On most of its trips, an observant passenger might have fancied himself a participant in a traveling congress of nations.

With the discovery of the precious metal in the Black Hills, in 1874, the gold fever struck the territory of Dakota and, true to form in the history of gold discovery, had called from the four corners of the earth a horde of delvers and diggers after the yellow stuff.

Argonauts old and Argonauts new, venerable Jasons who had sought the golden fleece in California in '49; middle-aged fortune hunters who had engaged in the quest of the auriferous earth in far-off Australia, or tramped under the banner of "Pike's Peak or Bust;" youthful gold-seekers who made up in enthusiasm and greed what they so woefully lacked in experience—all set their faces toward the "land of the Dakotahs," where lay the pot of gold at the foot of the rainbow.

Rainbow-chasers are temperamentally the same the world over. One touch of Mammon makes the whole world kin. The sturdy Englishman and his neighbors—the aggressive, fighting, laughing Irishman and the canny, burr-tongued Scot; the volatile

Frenchman and his dearest foe, the phlegmatic German; the dark-eyed, dark-skinned Latin from sunny Spain or fair Italia; the flaxen-haired, pink-cheeked Scandinavian, perchance from the land of the midnight sun; the nondescript American in all his infinite variety—there is no country on the globe that has not furnished its quota of Argonauts wherever the news of gold-discovery has spread over the world, and these men ever have been brothers in arms.

Dakota received its full share of Argonauts from everywhere—and from "nowhere," if it so happened that, for private and personal reasons, one did not choose to publicly advertise his home and patronymic—and these gold-seekers all rode in the Deadwood stage.

Those who have traveled on the American frontier probably will bear witness that none of the passengers on the old-time stage patronized that venerable conveyance as a matter of choice. When a fellow had to get somewhere and had no horse, or couldn't ride if he had one, he traveled as best he might.

Of course, the ancient vehicle was uncomfortable —mightily so—but then, having made a virtue of necessity, it was a great privilege to romance about it in after years.

It always has been the delight of the gentle pioneer of early days to regale his fellow-travelers in the smoking room of the modern luxurious Pullman, with stories of the "days of old and the land of gold," when the giants of those days—of whom the *raconteur*, of course, was one—drove so gallantly into the mining camp in one of those crazy old stages. The modest hero paints the rickety old-time horror

in wonderful colors that make the modern palace on wheels blush for its own measly inferiority, and invests the ancient machine of torture with a piece of the brilliant halo with which he so ingenuously has decorated himself.

The dear old modern replica of the late Baron Münchausen, most distinguished Peer of the Court of Ananias, now proceeds to tell us how little he had of this world's goods when he descended on that mining camp, and what oodles of golden nuggets, and bars, and placer-dust he brought away with him. He may even tell one of the strain upon the springs of the stage produced by his sacks of the yellow metal on the way out of the diggings, statesward bound.

Perchance the pioneer of ancient days tells of that thrilling hold-up, in which the Wells-Fargo messenger was afraid to shoot, whereas he, single-handed and alone, dispersed a gang of road-agents that would have made a modern rogues' gallery look like the old-fashioned panoramic pictures of the heavenly angels in Paradise Lost! Should he tell you of these things, kind reader, have faith—of that sublime quality which moveth mountains.

However much of faith you may have, dear sir—or madam, 'tis but the rankest skepticism beside that which has impelled the Argonaut of all times and all nations to the quest of golden fortune.

A health to thee, brave Argonaut! In thy sturdy bosom dwell the three graces, Faith, Hope and Charity—and the greatest of these is Faith. Thou hast made little of fortune, but since the world was young, thou hast been the frontiersman of prosperous and peaceful civilization and the father of progress. May the ring of thy pick and the tintintabulation

of thy pan be music to the ears of mankind when the world has passed into the sere and yellow leaf.

Late of a pleasant, warm afternoon in May, 1878, the incoming Deadwood stage discharged its usual miscellaneous and cosmopolitan load of passengers in front of the rude post-office of the enterprising mining town.

The inevitable crowd of idlers that loitered about the place, languidly surveyed the passengers as they descended from the overloaded vehicle.

The tired, perspiring, unkempt passengers were so heavily covered with dust that they presented a homogeneity of appearance which quite concealed their racial, social and economic differences.

There rarely was any novelty among the new arrivals. They afforded the loungers little entertainment save that of watching the thirsty strangers as they hiked for the numerous saloons grouped around the post-office on the main street of the town.

Everybody's throat was thickly lined with road dust, and nobody was supposed to have a bias in favor of any particular saloon. The town was unfamiliar, the new-comers had yet to be educated in the matter of who gave the most "suds" for the money, or was least alert when a fellow poured his libation from the common bottle into the glass, which the initiated so discreetly covered with their hands as the liquor gurgled into the all-too-shallow receptacles. Later they would get their bearings, and some of them discriminatingly would patronize those refectories in which the bar-keepers were most urbane, considerate enough to look the other way when a "gent" poured out the "red," and who nev-

er handed a significant towel to a thirsty patron simultaneously with his glass.

With most new arrivals it merely was a case of "go to it!" The nearest bar was the best bar, and the one that first caught the eye of the dust-choked stranger always was the "nearest."

The Miners' Rest, a rude, wooden, two-story affair just across the street from the post-office, was literally what the late William Shakespeare, *nee* Lord Bacon, and other notables of the chaste and virtuous Elizabethan era, would have called "an hostelry hard by." It was so "hard by" that it received more than its share of the patronage of Deadwood's thirsty and hungry new arrivals. It was run by one McGinnis, who claimed lineage by direct descent from Brian Boru—"an' a dozen more o' the likes o' thim" ancient Celts.

Rumor had it that convenience of location alone was not responsible for the rush of eager sojourners to the Miners' Rest. It was said by envious competitors that sundry perquisites fell into the hands of Bill Harkins, the veteran driver of the stage, but this could not have been true, for the reason that the assumed parties to the alleged transaction both denied it, and they were the only persons qualified to speak with authority upon the subject.

Bill Harkins was a "two-gun-man" from somewhere or other, who had acquired his job of stage driving by virtue of the frontier wisdom of the Wells-Fargo outfit. The express company had more confidence in the safety of the stage with Bill on the box than they would have had if he were ranging free. Knowing something of his history, they had no confidence in anybody's ability to get the stage to its destination without mishap, so long as the

genial William was running loose. His munificent salary had a liberal bonus attached to it, but the express company considered Bill cheap at almost any figure within reason.

Joe McGinnis, the genial boniface of the Miners' Rest, was himself "some quick on the draw." In addition to this strictly martial and orthodox accomplishment, he was about as handy as they made them in a rough-and-tumble "argument." As expressed by a gentleman who had been so indiscreet as to get into an altercation with Mr. McGinnis relative to a personal score on the slate, one of Joe's fists was "knock-out-drops" and the other "concussion o' the brain."

Noting the talents of the doughty Harkins and the versatile McGinnis, the conservative attitude of the citizens of Deadwood toward all rumors of petty graft involving the two gentlemen may readily be understood.

Among the passengers that afternoon was a tall, dark-eyed, dark-haired, athletic-looking young man, apparently not yet in his thirties. His face was covered with a dark brown beard and mustache, evidently of recent growth. He was plainly, indeed, roughly dressed, and covered with more than his share of road-dust, which bore evidence of the discomfort of his long stage drive.

The rest of the new arrivals disembarked, went their several ways and the now empty stage was driven across the way to the Miners' Rest, where the driver unharnessed his horses and hitched them to the rack in the horse-shed. Bill then repaired to the bar of the hotel and proceeded to refresh himself

by copious libations to Bacchus, much to the delight of his old crony, McGinnis.

The young man was left standing alone among the loungers at the postoffice. He stood irresolutely looking about him for a moment and then, noting that the stage had been driven into the horse-shed of the Miners' Rest, turned inquiringly to the party of idlers:

"Well, gentlemen," he smilingly remarked, "I presume that the safest plan for a stranger who has not engaged hotel accommodations is to follow the stage."

"Betcher life," replied one of the crowd. "Foller Bill Harkins an' ye'll wear diamonds—an' maybe round up a drink."

"All right, boys," laughed the stranger. "That endorsement is good enough for me, but if I strike some good grub and a soft bed, I'll let Mr. Harkins have the diamonds and the liquor all to himself."

"Ye can git both, at McGinnis's wickiup," said another of the crowd.

"Thank you, sir. I'll go to it," said the newcomer, genially.

The young man crossed the street, followed by the gaze of the party of loiterers, and entered the Miners' Rest.

"A real feller, that, an' he looks like a game-cock, all right," remarked one man. "Look at them shoulders, boys! I'll bet he's got a punch in either hand."

"Which don't get him nothin' in these diggin's," snapped a grizzled old-timer whom the town knew as Dixie, his real patronymic being a mystery, and his native heath, according to his own statements, being the grand old state of Kentucky.

"Little ole Mister Colt has brung all kinds o' shoulders down ter the same size, in this neck o' the woods," he growled, "an' speakin' o' punches, a .44 rags the bush. It's safe to bet that that feller's one o' them d——d college dudes. It's ten dollars to two bits that he smokes cigaroots."

"Well, all the same, he looks good to me," insisted the first speaker."

"Maybe he won't look so good after he's been broke in," sneered Dixie.

"So? S'pose you appint yerself a committee o' one ter break him in," retorted the other.

"All right, pardner, I got ye," said Dixie, grimly, "I'm appinted right now, an' here's my badge." He significantly tapped his revolver butt.

"Better go slow, old hoss," warned another of the crowd. "Some tenderfoot's a goin' ter give ye a s'prise party, one o' these fine days.

"P'raps," growled the Kentuckian, truculently, "but I've got a perfectly good hunch that that partic'lar tenderfoot hain't struck this town yet—not by a great big damn sight."

The stranger entered the door of the hotel and glanced curiously about him. Inexperienced as he was in the ways of the far west, the combined office and bar-room of the Miner's Rest was to him a novel and most interesting spectacle.

A cheap, unplastered interior, ceiled with rough, matched boards. At one side of the room was a long pine bar. Behind the bar was the usual cheap mirror seen in saloons of the less pretentious sort, backing a shelf decorated with bottles, glasses and tumblers, the thickness of which suggested that durability in times of stress and riotous disorder, rather than artistic form and construction, was their most

useful quality. In a conspicuous position on the mirror was a placard reading, NO TICK. Above the glass in plain sight hung a repeating rifle. On the shelf below it lay a huge revolver.

The display of weapons was not as ingenuous as it seemed, for within easy reach on a narrow shelf beneath the bar, was another six-shooter. This arrangement was a most convenient one, as it enabled the man behind the bar to surprise a disorderly customer, who was likely to fix his attention upon the openly-displayed arsenal, thus leaving himself open to the persuasive argument of the unexpected gun.

On the opposite side of the room, separated by a large screen from the bar-room proper, was a small counter, behind which was painted in rude letters the inscription, OFFICE. Just above this sign was a framed embroidered motto, GOD BLESS OUR HOME.

Near the "office" desk in the corner of the room was a stairway, leading to the upper part of the house. Beneath the stairs, in one corner of the office, was a crude, rusty iron safe of medium size. Both the office and the bar-room were accessible from the street by a double store door, so arranged that persons entering the hotel could take their choice of sides of the screen.

The floor of the bar-room was thickly covered with saw-dust and ornamented with wooden, saw-dust-filled "spit-boxes," in multiplicity and great variety of form.

The walls of the bar-room were covered with cheap, gaudy prints—portraits of actresses and race-horses and pictures of prize-fights. On the walls of

the office were several biblical scenes and highly-colored landscape chromos.

The entire place was lighted with enormous coal-oil lamps, the chimneys of which were much the worse for soot and sundry cracks and nicks.

Scattered about the room were a number of plain wooden tables, flanked by stout, clumsy chairs. In the office stood an old-fashioned what-not, center table, and a horsehair-covered sofa and chairs.

The palpable effort that had been made to draw an ethical, moral and artistic dead-line between the "booze-parlor" and the hotel feature of the establishment was so comical that the stranger very nearly laughed outright.

Standing at the bar were a number of the young man's fellow-passengers, whom a large, perspiring, red-faced man of perhaps fifty years of age, in his shirt sleeves, assisted by a burly negro, as black as anything Africa ever produced, was endeavoring to serve with beverages.

The stranger was about to enter the bar-room, but noting that the two men behind the bar were having considerable trouble in handling the rush, had concluded to wait until there was a lull in business before negotiating for accommodations with the red-faced party—who manifestly was the proprietor of the hostelry—when a muscular, strenuous-looking middle-aged woman came down the stairs and bustled into the office in a business-like way which suggested that she decidedly "belonged."

The young man approached the desk and doffing his hat said politely:

"You are the proprietress of the hotel, I presume."

The woman looked at him for a second before replying.

"I'm Mrs. McGinnis, an' I'm runnin' this hotel, if that's pfwat yez mane."

"That is precisely what I mean, madam," he replied, amusedly.

"Then for pfwy don't yez say so in plain English?"

"Pardon me, madam, I'm a foreigner from the east, and I haven't been here long enough to learn the language."

The woman burst out laughing.

"I guess ye'll do, all right, Misther. Pfwat can I do fer yez?"

The stranger courteously made known his desire for accommodations and Mrs. McGinnis pushed toward him a battered, time-worn register, in which he inscribed the name, "Robert Parker."

"Where's yer baggage, Misther Parker?" inquired the hostess.

"It still is on the stage, madam."

"Well, son, as soon as that lazy nayger, Sam, gits a breathin' spell, I'll have him fetch it up fer yez."

She went to the bottom of the stairs and called:

"Ellen, dear!"

"Yes, mother," answered a sweet voice from above, and a pretty, apple-cheeked lass of sixteen or thereabouts, came tripping down the stairs.

"This is me daughther, Ellen, Misther Parker."

Parker bowed and smiled an acknowledgment of the introduction. The girl curtsied and blushed most charmingly.

Mrs. McGinnis took a key from the rack.

"Ellen 'll be afther showin' ye to yer room, sorr."

She look admiringly after the stranger as he followed her daughter upstairs.

"A foine young feller, that," she said to herself, "and," she chuckled, "he's nobody's fool, if innybody should ask ye. He'll be afther learnin' the ways o' this town pretty quick, I'm thinkin', an' this house sure is the place to learn 'em."

The girl conducted the new guest to his room and after näively instructing him in the matter of the hours for meals, with especial emphasis on the time when the rising bell was rung of mornings, disappeared.

The young man proceeded to remove the stains of dust and travel from his person, sighing the while for the cold tub of the effete east. Hardly had he completed his toilet when the supper bell rang. As he was voraciously hungry the sound was sweet music to his ears.

At the supper table Parker found a motley collection of the population of Deadwood, and a number of his stage-companions. These latter greeted him cordially.

Mrs. McGinnis introduced the new boarders to McGinnis, who in turn gave each of them an introduction to the old boarders collectively.

Save Mrs. McGinnis and her daughter, the only member of the fair sex at the table was a prim, bespectacled woman of attenuated proportions and uncertain age. This austere and unprepossessing person was a Yankee schoolma'am, from Boston or thereabouts. For only two months had she been teaching the Deadwood young idea to shoot, and already having discovered that the Black Hills' idea had rather too much "shoot" in it, had resigned her

job and was preparing to return to the land of beans, brains and Bunker Hill.

Not even the scarcity of respectable women in the town had impelled anyone of the male sex to tempt the lady to remain permanently in Deadwood. Her face was at once a defense and a stumbling block in her way through life. Her disposition evidently had fermented into acid in her youth, and she ever since had taken herself and the world so seriously that the acidity had become chronic.

Noting the rough appearance of most of the guests, the new boarder marveled at the decorum that prevailed at the table. A longer acquaintance with the McGinnises, and especially with the hostess, explained this quite satisfactorily. Under the persuasive influence of Mrs. McGinnis's tongue and the prestige of her husband's iron fists and ready gun, the atmosphere of the dining room was all that could have been desired by the most fastidious.

The meal ended, Parker took a stroll about the town. He never before had been in the far west, and therefore was greatly interested in everything that he saw. The newness and "hustle of the place especially impressed him. The men all wore a breezy, devil-may-care expression and moved with a "slap-dash" air that always has characterized the inhabitants of pioneer mining towns. Even the least prosperous-looking persons whom he met, appeared to the young man to be imbued with the characteristic spirit of the place. Many of the people were as amusing as they were interesting.

The stranger noted that, as is usual in mining communities, women were comparatively scarce. He noticed, also, that the women of Deadwood comprised only two classes—the good and the bad. The defer-

ence shown by the men to the one, and the lack of it exhibited toward the other, made the dividing line easy to distinguish, as always has been the case on the American frontier.

The vanguard of American civilization, unlike the people of more pretentious communities, never permitted any compromise in the classification of its women. Woe to the man who did not understand the principle underlying the arbitrary demarkation between virtue and vice, and was rash enough to cross the dead-line!

There never was any argument when a virtuous woman was insulted. The western pioneer carried his lawyer in his holster, and the advocate never was wordy, nor given to wasting time by mouthing technicalities.

The young man noted with special interest the great number of saloons, in every one of which he could see through the wide-open doors men sitting at tables engaged in gambling. To an easterner who did not understand the psychology of a people who, remote from the diversions of older centers of civilization, must of necessity seek relaxation as best they might, the thirst of the pioneer for whiskey and the popularity of gambling were incomprehensible.

The new arrival came to understand later that the pioneer spirit always is feverish and has an underlying stratum of recklessness and an eagerness for alliance with chance. The man who is willing to stake his life in the game of fortune, is prone to stake his substance on the turn of a card, especially when time weighs heavily on his hands.

Having completed his leisurely tour of the town,

Parker sauntered back to the hotel and entered the bar-room.

The room was filled with rough-looking men, most of whom were miners. A number were lined up at the bar; some were sitting at the tables, at nearly all of which the game of poker was in progress. Among those playing were several genteel-looking persons who obviously were professional gamblers.

The majority of the men in the room wore belts and holsters in which were guns of a caliber suggesting that Deadwood already had organized an Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company in imitation of that center of all things worthy of imitation—Boston.

At one of the tables several of Parker's traveling companions were sitting, contentedly sipping their beer or drinking whisky and curiously surveying the novel scene in the room. There was a vacant chair at the table and, noticing Parker, one of the men motioned to him to join them, an invitation which he gladly accepted.

The young man ordered a bottle of soda, which Sam, who was wildly flying about the room in a vain effort to wait on everybody at once, served him with an air of mingled pity and distrust.

In the crowd at the bar stood Dixie, a bit the worse for numerous libations of "red-eye." In the midst of a toast to everything and everybody, he chanced to observe Parker, and in a hazy way recalled the conversation with his friend regarding the stranger on his arrival that afternoon. The miner abruptly set his glass of whisky down upon the bar and unsteadily made his way to the table where the new-comer was sitting.

Now, at bottom, Dixie really was a very good sort,

but his fellow-miner practically had challenged his courage that afternoon, and his whiskey-inflamed imagination magnified the importance of the incident as soon as he caught sight of Parker. The miner was not especially vindictive, but he felt that his prestige was in danger, and this must be maintained at any cost. He had a grievance against the person who was responsible for the challenge and proposed to vindicate his honor.

As the friend with whom he had discussed the stranger was among the men at the bar, Dixie decided that the time was propitious and the stage setting perfect for the presentation of the one-act drama: "What's the matter with Dixie?"

He looked contemptuously at the young man and then at the partially emptied glass of soda standing on the table in front of him, and turned to Sam, who just then was passing with a tray of "empties."

"I shay, Sham,—hic—ye black rascal! Bring this yere damned tenderfoot a bottle o' milk with a—hic! —nipple on it, an' be sure it's—hic!—warm."

There was a roar all over the room at this sally.

Parker paid no attention to the miner's insulting remarks, but raised his glass and quietly sipped its contents.

The room suddenly grew hushed, as though everybody expected something interesting to happen. The crowd tensely observed the scene and awaited the entertainment which experience had taught them was sure to come.

"Tryin' ter—hic!—commit suicide with that stuff, are ye?" sneered Dixie. "Well, ye—hic!—can't do it around these diggin's!" and he knocked the glass out of the stranger's hand, the remnants of soda splashing in the young man's face.

Parker instinctively comprehended that he was confronted with a crucial situation, and that upon his action would depend whether or not the town would extend to him the right hand of fellowship.

"My friend," he said, calmly, "you're drunk, but not too drunk to know what you're doing. I want you to apologize for that insult and do it in a hurry."

The miner howled in derision, and drew back his fist as if to strike him.

Dixie never knew exactly what happened, but the wise ones in the crowd subsequently told him that the stranger gave him a short-arm jab to the jaw that was a "peach." They also expressed the belief that if Parker could be induced to give lessons in man-handling to everybody in town, there'd be a slump in the gun market. Later, Dixie himself humorously asserted that, until McGinnis assured him to the contrary, he suspected that Parker had wrenched a leg off the table and "soaked" him with it.

Dixie went down in a heap, and as he fell, the young man snatched the miner's gun from its holster and tossed the weapon to McGinnis, who, too late to be of service, had rushed from behind the bar to quell the disturbance.

McGinnis looked in open-mouthed astonishment from the gun to Parker and from Parker to the gun.

"Well, pfwat the divil?" he sputtered. The crazy omadhaun ain't got nary a gun on him, an' he hands me this wan!"

Parker rose to the occasion, and before any of Dixie's friends had recovered from their astonishment sufficiently to interfere, he mounted a chair and waved his hand for attention. The men had begun

to surge threateningly towards him, but suddenly stopped as though dumbfounded by his assurance.

The fallen miner rounded to, and sat stupidly blinking at the scene and wondering where all the new stars he saw twinkling in the firmament had come from.

McGinnis, now speechlessly bewildered, with Dixie's gun still in his hand, stood gazing at the unusual scene as though he could not believe the evidence of his senses.

"I just want to say a word to you, boys," said Parker, calmly, "I'm a stranger among you, but I'm here with the intention of staying and taking my chances along with the rest of you, on equal terms if I can. I'm very sorry to have had anything disagreeable happen, for I want you all for friends, not enemies. The little disturbance that occurred just now, was not of my seeking, and I tried to avoid it, as you saw, but our friend here was determined to compel me to defend myself. Now, I can't accommodate everyone in this room with a fight, although if you insist on it I'll do the best I can—and, as somebody is bound to be disappointed, suppose we call it a day's work and shake hands all around. You fellows look to me like men who want to play fair, and I'll bet that the gentleman on the floor is a mighty good fellow when he's not in liquor. My name's Bob Parker, and I want to be a citizen of Deadwood and help you dig the bowels out of these old hills about here. Come, boys, what do you say?"

A rousing cheer greeted the young man as he concluded his speech.

Dixie now was pretty well over the effects of

the blow and fairly sober. As he was shakily rising to his feet, Parker jumped down from his chair and assisted him to rise.

The miner was furious, and his hand instinctively went to his holster.

"Where's my gun?" he raged.

"Here it is, Jack," said McGinnis, presenting the weapon but keeping a tight hold of it.

"What in hell are you doin' with my gun, Joe McGinnis?"

"Sure, an' Misther Parker gave it to me," chuckled McGinnis. He was afraid you'd be afther hurtin' yerself wid it. Yez might ha' fell on it, an' Misther Parker is that tinder-hearted he couldn't stand the thoughts o' that."

Dixie was dumbfounded, and blinked dazedly first at Parker and then at McGinnis.

"D'ye mean ter—ter tell me, Joe, that—that feller give ye my gun?"

"Sure, Dixie, old boy, just to hold fer yez," grinned McGinnis.

Parker offered his hand to the miner.

"Come, Dixie, old man, be a good sport and shake hands with me. We might as well be friends."

Dixie, now thoroughly sobered, stood irresolutely for a moment gazing at his conqueror as he might at a new species of animal. Then, moved by one of those inexplicable impulses which sometimes sway the roughest of men, he wrung the young man's hand with a grip that almost made him wince.

"By G——d! I *will* shake hands with ye, young feller! Ye're some good sport yerself, if anybody should ask ye."

As the men shook hands the crowd cheered until

the rickety building fairly shivered. The miner's enthusiastic friends then loudly inquired:

"What's the matter with Parker?" and, having decided he was "all right," they proceeded vociferously to analyze Dixie, with a similar result.

McGinnis now mounted a chair and invited everybody to take a "tin-roof," otherwise known as "one on the house," and everyone within the sound of his voice, even several cautious parties who were curiously peeping in at the street door and waiting for the usual fireworks to begin, flocked to the bar. Good fellowship was in the air, and Parker was even permitted to indulge in another soda—which complaisance on the part of the crowd possibly was a natural sequence of Dixie's experience with the soft-drinking stranger.

When Parker and Dixie separated that night, each man realized that he had gained a friend who was worth while. For his part, the young man intuitively felt that he had begun his career in Deadwood under most favorable conditions.

After the rest of the men had gone, a stalwart, bearded, fine-looking man of about thirty-five years of age remained standing at the bar talking with McGinnis. Parker said good-night to mine host and was about to repair to his room, when McGinnis called to him.

"Just a minute, Misther Parker. Here's a gintleman that wants to sphake to yez."

Parker approached the two men and McGinnis said:

"Shake hands wid Misther Horton, Misther Parker."

After the two had exchanged the usual perfunctory greetings, McGinnis remarked:

"Misther Horton is Sheriff o' Deadwood, sorr."

"Ah! I see," laughed Parker, "then I suppose I am under arrest."

"Hardly," grinned Horton, with a chuckle. "It's too late to send fer help, an' ye might frisk my gun. I just wanted to meet ye and tell ye what I think o' that little performance tonight. I came in just in time to hear yer speech, an' the boys told me the rest. That little piece o' work was 24 carats fine, an' don't ye forget it."

"Oh, there wasn't much to it," replied the young man, "I guess the fellows in this town are all right, if one knows how to take them."

"Yes," retorted Horton, gravely, "but you *didn't* know. You took a long chance."

"Well, anyway, I got away with it," said Parker, smilingly.

"You sure did, an' if I know the signs, you're so solid with the boys in this town that dynamite couldn't jar ye."

"I'll be mighty glad if that proves to be true," said Parker, seriously. "It looked for a few minutes to-night as though I had made a very bad start."

"An' so it might have been," replied Horton, "if ye hadn't been lucky. Ye never can tell what a crowd'll do when it gits started. If the notion strikes 'em ter be nasty an' make the wrong move, all hell can't stop 'em. Some o' them 'all right' fellers, as you call 'em, sometimes shoot first an' send regrets an' flowers afterward."

"Come, byes," said McGinnis, "let's have wan on the house. Yez can have some tay this toime, if ye want it, an' there'll be no kick comin', Misther Parker. I don't want ter sell ye inny whisky, inny-

how," he chuckled. "If yez can punch the way ye did the night on soda wather, pfwat the divil *would* yez do on whiskey?"

The party laughed heartily at the Irishman's appreciation of his new boarder's hitting ability.

"Here's to the soda punch," the sheriff said, raising his glass.

The drinks having been stowed away, Horton looked at his watch.

"Holy smoke! boys," he exclaimed, "it's some past bed time. It's 2 g. m. Mr. Parker here, ought ter be hittin' the hay an' gettin' the stage-ache out o' his bones, an' the sheriff ought ter be settin' a good example fer the citizens by gittin' home himself. Let's have a night-cap an' call it quittin' time."

Parker laughingly begged off on the plea that he feared drowning if he imbibed any more soda, and Horton and McGinnis finished the spirituous ceremony alone.

As Horton bade the young man good night at the door, he gave him a hearty hand-shake and said, warmly:

"Drop in an' see me tomorrow, Mr. Parker, I want ter know ye better. If ye don't mind me bein' plain-spoken, I'll tell ye right now that I like yer style, an' I've got a hunch that you an' me are goin' to be pretty good friends."

"Thank you, sir," rejoined the other, laughingly. "The 'hunch' is mutual, and I'm pretty certain that with you and Dixie for a social starter, I'm not going to be lonesome."

"Right ye are," chuckled Horton, "but I'm d——d glad that ye didn't hand me the same kind of a

card ye did t' Dixie. That jaw of his sure looked some tumid."

"Honors are easy, sir. From the set of your shoulders and the looks of that arsenal in your holsters, I am inclined to be somewhat glad myself," returned Parker gayly, as he ascended the stairs.

Chapter XXIII

THE NEW SCHOOL-MA'AM

As Tom Horton had predicted, the exciting events of Parker's first evening in Deadwood proved most auspicious for the young man, and he became immensely popular with his fellow-townsmen.

Dixie, who had served with such embarrassment to himself as a self-appointed committee of one to welcome the new arrival, became his staunchest admirer, while Horton and he became inseparables.

Parker found his new friend to be the salt of the earth, honest to a fault and as big-hearted and courageous as he was stalwart of frame. As Horton was a bachelor, the two men found many opportunities for close companionship and intimate communion, when the sheriff's official duties did not interfere. On numerous occasions of emergency Horton shared these duties with his friend by appointing him his deputy, in which capacity he proved to be as brave and reliably cool as was the sheriff himself. On one occasion when a number of men were in jail awaiting trial for several killings that had occurred in a fracas resulting from an attempt at mine-jumping, Parker's assistance alone prevented a wholesale lynching.

The young man finally left the Miners' Rest, much to the regret of the McGinnis family, who had become very fond of him, and took up his abode with

the sheriff at the latter's official headquarters in a little one-story building on the main street, some distance from the center of the town.

Soon after his arrival, Parker procured a miner's outfit, including the inevitable six-shooter and cartridge belt, and began his career as a gold-seeker. He labored most industriously in the hills and tried out prospect after prospect, without any reward other than the bronzing of face and hardening of muscles which at his age are the inevitable result of a strenuous and clean out-of-door life.

He kept good hours, adhered to his temperate habits and let gambling and all other vicious indulgences severely alone. He went about sufficiently to keep on good terms with his fellow-townsmen and, as he did not affect the airs of a moral example or social "perfecto," his irreproachable personal habits did not jar the free and easy sensibilities of his Deadwood friends, nor lessen his popularity.

One pleasant evening about a month after the young man's arrival in Deadwood, Parker and his friend Tom were sitting in front of the sheriff's office, engaged in conversation on the subject of mining.

The young miner was greatly discouraged by his ill luck in prospecting, and his friend was endeavoring to console him as best he could by relating the experiences of a number of other miners who at first also had bad luck in the Hills, but finally had struck rich.

"There was a feller by the name o' Talbot, from Buffalo, I think he said,—although previous locations don't count fer much with us—who dug around these hills for six months without hittin' it off. He didn't git enough color ter dazzle a mosquito's eye.

He was poor as Job's turkey when he struck town, an' ye'd better believe that, fer a while, he didn't git any richer as he went along—poverty and bad prospects are twins in the diggin's, ye know. He finally reached a point where he was clean busted an' walkin' on his uppers, when Billy Marshall, who ran the old Empire saloon an' dance hall, come to the front an' grub-staked the poor cuss. Well, inside o' two months the feller struck it rich—struck a prospect that was gold from the grass roots. He sold out fer a cool half million, and went back to the States ter play gentleman.

"Have ye ever noticed a sign down the street, 'Miners' Bank o' Deadwood?' Well, that's the half o' that five hundred thousand that Talbot left here with the feller that grub-staked him. The bank president's name is Marshall. The Hon. William Marshall, if ye please—'Billy' don't go any more.

"Brace up, old man!" continued Horton, slapping his disconsolate friend on the shoulder; "you'll make a ten-strike yet, see if ye don't."

"Yes, that's all well enough," grumbled Parker, moodily, "but I guess it takes brains to turn up the color, and I'm beginning to think that I'm a bit shy on that useful commodity."

Horton laughed vociferously.

"Brains! Brains! Sufferin' cats! Ye didn't know Talbot. Brains! Huh! He didn't know enough ter read his meal ticket. As for Bill Marshall—hell, man! if ye knew that chunk o' phoney metal ye'd think it took a damned sight less brains ter run a bank than it does ter make a fluke o' minin'."

"All right, Tom, but I'll bet that either of them

had more of the sort of brains that's necessary in mining than I have."

"Oh, shut up, Bob! Ye make me tired. If brains an' education was all that's necessary in minin', you'd have all the gold in the Black Hills dug, bagged an' banked by now. Do as I tell ye, brace up—an' keep on a diggin'."

A sudden thought struck Horton.

"By the way, my boy, are yer funds runnin' low?"

"W—why, no. What made you think they were, Tom?"

"I just guessed it—an' now I'm sure of it. Come off, now!" Horton went on, as Parker was about to protest. "Ye can't fool yer Uncle Dudley. Now, Bob, you just quit yer worryin'. My salary an' perquisites goes right along just the same, whether you're striking' pay dirt or bum gravel, an' as I'm the landlord o' this dump that you're a hangin' out at, an' on good terms with the sheriff, ye needn't be afraid o' bein' evicted fer non-payment o' board an' room rent."

Parker was too much overcome by his friend's generosity to answer. He could only grasp Tom's hand in silent appreciation of his kindness.

"Hello!" exclaimed Horton, "there goes somethin' that Deadwood's goin' ter be mighty proud of, if the whole blamed town don't carry it further an' fall in love with her—an' git ter fightin' over her."

Parker followed his friend's gaze and saw a young woman just emerging from the Miners' Rest. She hesitated a moment at the door and then crossed the street and entered the post-office.

"Evidently a strange lady. But why the excitement, Tom?" queried Parker, listlessly.

"Why, she's the new school-ma'am from the East. Hain't ye heard about her?"

"No, can't say that I have. I haven't been around much for three or four days, and haven't visited the McGinnis's for at least a week. When did she strike town?"

"Day before yesterday. Miss Vinegar-Face left the next mornin' after the new teacher landed. Couldn't stand the competition of a real, sure-enough lady with a sweet smile, I guess."

Parker abstractedly took his knife from his pocket, opened it and picking up a stick proceeded to whittle aimlessly.

"So," said the young man, indifferently. "Who is the paragon of brains, beauty and grace?"

"She's from some place in New York. Her name is Weathers—no, it's Weatherson."

Parker uttered an exclamation and sprang to his feet.

"What's the matter, Bob?"

"Why—I—I cut my hand a little; that's all," replied Parker, holding up the wounded member in evidence.

Horton was so solicitous about the wounded hand that he did not notice his friend's agitation, but rushed into their quarters after something with which to dress the wound.

"Good Lord! What a fool I am!" exclaimed Parker, disgustedly, as he endeavored to stanch the blood that was freely spouting from his wound, which really was quite severe.

"How could it be she?" he muttered impatiently. "What would she be doing here—teaching school in a mining town. I'd better see a doctor tomorrow and have my head examined. Incidentally, I'd bet-

ter get some dope for first aid to the nervous, if I'm going to jump like a frightened alley-cat every time anything stirs me up."

When Horton returned with a crude bandage, his friend had regained command of himself and was calm and self-contained.

"Kids like you hadn't oughter play with cuttin' tools, Bob," grinned Horton, as he bandaged the wound.

"Shouldn't wonder if you were right, Tom—or with fire, either," replied Parker, gravely.

Just as he finished his primitive surgical ministrations, Horton saw the school-ma'am emerge from the postoffice and come leisurely down the street directly toward the two men.

"Great snakes! Here she comes, Bob! I'll give ye a knockdown."

"What!—another?" said Bob, enigmatically.

Tom gazed at his friend in a puzzled fashion for a moment.

"No, not another. Ye must have dreamed about the first time. Anyhow, here she is a comin', head on an' all sails set. Ain't she sixteen dollars to the ounce—eh?"

Parker earnestly studied the young woman as she approached, and long before she came within speaking distance recognized her as one whom he had known under circumstances which he had tried hard to forget. She had been one of the principals in a certain scene in his drama of life, which he had endeavored to bury so deep in the waters of Lethe that it never could return to haunt his memory. Not only had he tried to forget the scene, but also the actors. And he almost had succeeded in forgetting. The old life had become like an awful dream, the

memory of which time had toned down into a dim, chaotic impression that bade fair to fade away altogether, ere long. But now!—

"Why did she ever come here?" he thought. "How did it happen? Great God! Suppose she should recognize me!—"

He mechanically put his hand to his face, which now was covered with a luxuriantly heavy beard.

"Pshaw! What am I afraid of?" he reflected; "she wouldn't know me in a thousand years. Why should she remember a—"

"Good evening, Mr. Horton," said the young woman, bestowing on the sheriff a dazzling smile that set the honest fellow's susceptible heart thumping like a steam hammer.

Parker removed his hat.

"Good evenin', ma'am," replied Horton, awkwardly.

Noticing Parker's hat in his hand, the sheriff suddenly remembered the proprieties and snatched off his own as if he were angry at it, an appearance which he made plainer by fumbling the head-piece and dropping it on the sidewalk.

Parker picked up the hat and handed it to Horton, saying, in a mischievous aside:

"I told you that hat was too small for you, Tom—but why throw it at the lady?"

The sheriff glared savagely at his friend for a second and then, with eyes twinkling at the humor of the situation, said:

"I just hate to do it, ma'am, but I've got ter introduce ye ter my partner here. This is Mister Parker, Miss Weatherson. Ye just noticed, ma'am, that he can handle his hat mighty genteel—an' that's about all for him.

The lady laughed merrily at the quaint introduction.

"I am very glad to meet you, Mr. Parker," she said, cordially.

As he clasped the young woman's hand in his own, Parker was so overcome by emotion that he was almost as awkward with embarrassment as was Horton.

"I—I am delighted to meet you, Miss Weatherson, and—and I am glad to know that the school is going to be in such good hands. I—I hope you'll stick, Miss."

"So, Mr. Horton has told you that I am the new school mistress, has he? Well, Mr. Parker, I've just *got* to stick. It's bread and butter with me. Not only do I hope that the people here will like me, but I am going to make them like me."

"And we'll help ter make 'em like her, won't we, Bob?" interposed Horton, gallantly.

"We surely will, Tom," and Parker, his equipoise regained, smiled indulgently at his friend.

"But possibly we are interfering with your walk, Miss Weatherson," he ventured.

"Oh, no," she protested, "it is growing dark and I am going to return to the hotel. I should have started earlier for my constitutional."

After a few moments' desultory conversation, the young woman bade the two men good evening and departed.

"Go along with her, you chump!" said Parker, giving his friend a shove in the direction she had taken.

Horton rose to the occasion and rushed after the school mistress.

"I just—just happened to think," he said, "that—

I was goin' down ter McGinnis's an'—an' if—if yer don't mind, I'll—"

"I shall be very glad of your company, Mr. Horton, if," she laughed, "people will not think I'm under arrest."

"No fear o' that, Miss Weatherson. Anyhow, if they do, they'll not think it out loud."

The young woman glanced at his determined face and massive shoulders and at the guns in his belt and concluded that when Tom Horton chose to do other persons' thinking for them, he probably did it most effectually.

Parker sat for several minutes dejectedly looking after the couple as they strolled down the street. Suddenly rising to his feet he struck himself a violent blow on the chest with his clenched fist.

"Was there ever such an unfortunate fool as I am?" he exclaimed in fierce self-reproach. "An exile!—aye, worse, an outcast! penniless, with nothing in the future except what I can hammer out by drudgery—unless I strike pay-dirt in these hills—and here I am taking up the old dream just where I left it, back there in—"

As he turned again and looked down the street towards town, he shuddered at the recollection.

Miss Weatherson was just bidding Horton adieu at the door of the hotel. A moment later Parker saw his friend saunter across the street and enter the postoffice.

"Dear, susceptible old Tom!" he said to himself, "I wish you luck, my boy, but I fear there are breakers ahead, unless Miss Weatherson adopts the western idea of manhood and forgets her eastern associations and culture. Grammar doesn't make the man, but I'm mightily afraid that it counts too

much with her order for your peace of mind, if things go as I suspect they will.

"Well, I'm out of it, for good and all," he sighed, "and I'll do the best I can to aid you, my faithful friend. With the exception of Jack Halloran, you're the best fellow I ever knew, and if I can help that lovely girl see through your outer crust and appreciate the real man beneath, I'm going to do it."

Parker entered the cabin, hunted up his pipe and tobacco pouch and when the sheriff returned an hour later he found his friend sitting in the front office with his chair tipped back against the wall and his hat pulled over his eyes, puffing away like mad at his pipe.

The two sat quietly smoking for a long time, without speaking. Parker was first to break the silence.

"See here, Tom, you're coming on. You'll be quite a ladies' man, before you get through."

"Oh, hell! Bob, stop yer kiddin'. I've got a fine chance ter be a ladies' man, I don't guess."

"Well, don't fret about your standing with the ladies in general, if you can pull it off right with the particular one."

Horton turned and looked squarely at his friend.

"Just tip up the brim o' that hat, Bob, an' let me see which way ye're lookin'. I want ter know how much josh there is in yer conversation as we mosey along."

Parker laughed and shoved his hat to the back of his head.

"There, how's that, Tom?"

"That's better, my boy. You was sayin'—?"

"I was saying that you needn't worry about the favor of the ladies so long as you make a hit with *the* lady."

"Meanin, by that, Miss Weatherson, I s'pose."

"Yes, that's the idea, precisely."

Horton blew a huge whiff of smoke from his lips and fussed with his pipe for a moment before answering.

"Lookee here, Bob, ye don't think I've gone off my nut entirely, do ye?" he asked, moodily.

"Thought I saw symptoms, Tom."

"Say, partner, I hain't got much book learnin', nor much—much—"

"Culture, eh?"

"Yes, that's the dope; I hain't got much culture, but I'm not quite a damned fool. Why, man, what would a woman like that be doin'—thinkin' of a rough-neck like me?

"Symptoms! You talk about symptoms!" he continued, hotly. "Yes, maybe there *was* a few symptoms, but it took just fifteen minutes to cure 'em. Why, man, she talks like a book, an' knows more'n any man in these diggin's—barrin' yerself. An' by the way, Bob Parker!" he exclaimed, "I suspect that you'd be just about the proper caper for the little school-ma'am!"

"Forget it, Tom," replied Bob, with a forced laugh; "I'm not a marrying man."

"Somebody back east, eh?"

"Yes, I—well, I lost her, Tom."

"Oh! Beg your pardon, Bob, I—"

"No especial harm done, old man, only I'm trying to forget, that's all. By the way, Tom," he continued, "don't be too sure about your stock being low because your grammar is not up to the Harvard standard. Women are funny creatures, and Miss Weatherson may like you just because you *are* different from the grammatical eastern dudes."

Horton knocked the ashes from his pipe, rose to his feet and entered their quarters. He turned at the door and looked steadily at his friend for a moment.

"Are you joshin' me, Bob?" he finally asked.

"Not a bit of it, my dear boy. The subject is too serious for trifling."

"An' ye really think I'd have a ghost of a show?"

"Yes, and better than a 'ghost'."

"Darned if I ain't got a sneakin' notion ter try my luck, Bob."

"Well," rejoined Parker, "the worst that can happen to you will be getting turned down."

"Yes, that's no dream—that *would* be the 'worst' thing that could happen," said Horton, gloomily.

"Go to it, anyway, Tom, and count on me for anything I can do to help the game along."

"D'ye mean that, Bob Parker?"

"You can bet your bottom dollar I do, Tom," and Parker extended his hand.

Horton silently shook his friend's hand until the latter's fingers were numb, then knocked the ashes from his pipe and entered the office. Parker, sighing deeply, followed the sheriff's example.

Chapter XXIV

INITIATING A TENDERFOOT

Life in Deadwood had been decidedly humdrum for weeks. There had been comparatively few new arrivals in town and these were the commonplace variety of fortune-seekers. Time was fast becoming a deadly drag, and the old residents were beginning to feel oppressed by the *ennui* which monotonous everyday events are wont to produce in such energetic citizens as are found in new mining communities.

Widespread *ennui* usually was the forerunner of a violent letting off of steam by the more exuberant spirits among the populace, and some of the residents had begun to wonder what particular outbreak was in prospect, when there arrived a stranger who apparently was sent by kind Providence to relieve the leaden dullness of the town.

The usual crowd was gathered at the Miners' Rest one evening, in feverish quest of such diversion and recreation as firewater and the game of draw-poker afforded. McGinnis and his ebon-hued helper, Sam Merritt, sometime boss of a Pullman car somewhere east of the Mississippi, were having their habitually strenuous time in meeting the demands of thirsty patrons.

Dixie and three other men, two of whom evidently were miners, the third being a professional gambler, were sitting at one of the tables playing poker and

aiding McGinnis in his laudable efforts to reduce his supply of fluids.

"I say, boys," said Dixie, "you'd oughter see what blowed in on the stage this afternoon."

"What was that, Dixie?" asked one of his companions.

"A real, live Johnny Bull, sure as I'm a Kentuckian."

"What's he like, Dixie?" inquired another.

"Say, pardner, don't ask me ter describe him to an eyelash, fer I can't do the subjeck justice. He's a tall, slab-sided, red-headed chap, dressed in a Scotch cap an' a suit o' clothes that ye could play checkers on. I heard them checks plain, when the stage was a mile down the road. An' say, boys, ye'd oughter see the pane o' glass in his eye. How he keeps it screwed in is more'n I know."

"Where'd he get steered to," queried the gambler.

"Well, I saw the feller a talkin' with Bill Harkins, an' I guessed where he'd land, all right," said Dixie. "McGinnis has got him hid somewheres. How about that, Mac?" he called.

"Pfwat's that, Dixie?"

"What did ye do with that English gent that blowed in on the stage this afternoon?"

"Shtowed him away upstairs, begorra. Oi was afraid some o' you divils 'd be afther shtealin' him."

"Which was some dirty deal on me, Mac. I saw him first. Where is he now?"

"The lasht I saw o' the spalpeen, he was thryin' to borry wan o' me ould woman's tubs, fer to take a 'bawth' in it," chuckled McGinnis. "Sh—h! boys, here he comes now, bedad!"

The appearance of the person who was slowly

coming down the stairs and wonderingly sizing up the strangely-assorted crowd in the bar-room, corresponded to a nicety with Dixie's description of the new arrival, and spoke well for the accuracy of the miner's faculty of observation.

The stranger landed at the bottom of the stairs, crossed the office and entered the bar-room. Just within the entrance he stopped short, readjusted his be-ribboned monocle and calmly surveyed the assembled citizens as though he were a naturalist studying new fauna.

Dixie beckoned to Sam and when that worthy answered the summons, industriously whispered in the negro's capacious ear.

"Suah! I done got some, Mistah Dixie," grinned the negro.

Sam rushed out of the room and returning threw a handful of semi-round objects upon the floor. The prunes, for such they proved to be, rolled about in the damp sawdust and became incrusted so that they were much larger than their natural size.

The negro now seized a huge broom and proceeded industriously to sweep the floor, the prunes rolling about in a most erratic fashion, gathering on the way more sawdust, with a sprinkling of tobacco-juice which inaccurate marksmen who had failed to hit the spit-boxes had liberally contributed to the general mussiness of the floor.

Sam took good care that his efforts at sweeping took him directly towards the stranger, who stood between the door and the vigorously wielded broom, and perforce was compelled to get out of the negro's way.

The Englishman screwed the monocle more tightly into his eye and curiously surveyed the floor

sweepings which Sam was rapidly propelling toward the door.

Everybody, save Dixie and his party, openly sized up the stranger. The four card players pretended to be absorbed in their game, but surreptitiously glanced from time to time at the odd-looking newcomer.

"I'll raise you ten," said the gambler, after carefully studying his hand.

"I'll see that ten, an' go ye ten better," growled Dixie.

The players again studied their cards, meanwhile watching the stranger out of the corners of their devilment-reflecting eyes.

The Englishman readjusted his monocle and stooped to get a better view of the floor sweepings.

"My word!" he drawled, "What extraor'narily large grapes you have in this country!"

"Grapes!" exclaimed Sam, "Grapes! Why, dem ain't grapes, boss. I'm s'prised at yo' all! Dem's eyes dat was gouged out here dis evenin'."

"Eyes? Why, me good man, how remarkable! what?"

"Suah! Didn't yo' all hear de goin's on. My! Sech carryin's on I nebbah did see befo'."

Sam grinned until his huge, white back teeth were in evidence, and winked at the men who were standing at the bar interestedly surveying the scene.

"Yes, sah, an' de gemmen ober yondah, dey all sez dat *dey* nebbah did see no sech a ruckus."

"Just listen ter the nigger a stringin' the tenderfoot," said one of Dixie's companions.

The party stopped its play and delightedly listened to the dialogue between the Englishman and the negro.

"How extraor'nary, really! An' do they operate on eyes here often?"

"Dey done operates 'bout wonst a week, boss—jes' 'bout wonst a week. De gemmen in dis yer town is de most playfullest dat I ebber seed since I done 'solved partnership wid Mistah George M. Pullman. Dem gemmen on de kyars sho was de cap sheaf ob all I ebber *did* see. Dey used ter shoot each udder thoo de kyurtains ob dey all's berths, somethin' scandalous. Berry keerless lot o' gemmen on dem sleepin' kyars, sah."

The Englishman adjusted his monocle and slowly looked Sam over.

"My word! I should think so, really."

"Now, what d'ye think o' that?" exclaimed one of the crowd of miners. "Let's git up a rough-house an' 'nitiate that sucker. Jim, go tip it off ter Dixie."

The man addressed as "Jim" went to Dixie's table and whispered in that worthy's ear, flirting his thumb toward the Englishman.

"Great! Hot stuff!" exclaimed Dixie. "but be damned careful where you pint them guns! Some o' you fellers hadn't oughter be trusted with shootin' irons, nowhow."

"Oh, don't worry, Dixie," interposed the gambler, who intuitively sensed the fun that was coming. "Nothing will be hurt but the floor and the ceiling, and McGinnis'll have to stand for that. It'll help his trade along. This town has got one foot in the grave anyhow, and needs something to wake it up."

Dixie left the table and joined the men at the bar.

"Hey, there, Johnny Bull!" he cried.

The Englishman turned toward the group at the

bar, adjusted his eye-glass and calmly surveyed Dixie from head to foot.

"W. Ponsonby Smithers, if you don't mind. An' I'm not at all keen on that 'Johnny Bull' stuff, dontcher know."

"All right, Ponsy, old sox," replied Dixie, "we'll let it go at that—an' cut out the J. B. stuff. Come an' have a drink."

Mr. Smithers evidently was not so sensitive in the matter of convivial invitations as he was regarding the taking of liberties with his dignity.

"Don't mind if I do, really."

As Smithers lined up with the miners, Dixie hit him a resounding whack between the shoulders, knocking the breath clean out of him, and exclaiming:

You're all right, pard! Ain't he, boys?"

"Betcher life!" "He's the real thing!" "Nothin' to it!" cried the miners in raucous and inharmonious chorus.

Mr. Smithers replaced the monocle in his orbit, it having been jarred out of its receptacle by Dixie's warm greeting.

"How extraor'nary, really! So glad I'm fit, don't-cher know."

"What'll ye have, pard? Nominate yer pizen," said Dixie.

"I'll have a bottle of Bass, if you don't mind."

"The hell ye say!" snorted McGinnis, resting his big hands on the bar and leaning over it toward the Englishman. "The fishin' season's over, me laddie buck, an' begorra, ye'll be afther takin' some ould rye, I'm thinkin', unless yez want a scuttle o' suds."

Smithers cynically inspected McGinnis's huge bulk through his monocle before replying.

"Will I, really! But I'm no horse, don'tcher know."

The crowd could not contain itself any longer, but laughed and stamped its feet until the bottles and glasses behind the bar actually danced.

Smithers looked bewildered, and Dixie came to the rescue.

"Maybe you ain't a horse, Ponsy, but you're a thoroughbred just the same. Ye see, 'rye' means whiskey, the best stuff on earth fer tenderfeet—toughens 'em right up."

"Quite so! rawther clevah idea, that!" ejaculated Smithers. "Rye! Whiskey! Don't mind if I do. I'll take it neat, bar-keeper, if you don't mind."

"Will yez though?" growled the belligerent McGinnis. "Begobs, ye'll take it sthraight, Misther Tinderfoot!"

Smithers made another deliberate monocular inspection of the landlord.

"Will I, really? how extraor'nary!"

Glasses were filled all around, the Englishman taking a liberal portion of McGinnis's justly celebrated "red-eye."

"Well, here's how," said Dixie, and the crowd clinked glasses.

"Your very good health, gentlemen," responded Smithers.

The liquor went sizzling on its gladsome way toward the arid regions that lay concealed in the anatomies of the miners. Smithers struggled manfully with his own dose of liquid fire and succeeded in downing the major portion of it. He set his glass upon the bar and gasped and strangled as if he had inhaled the liquor instead of drinking it.

"Very good name for your spirits, bar-keeper,—very good, indeed!" he sputtered, when he had caught his breath. "Me throat is twisted all awry!"

The crowd howled at the Englishman's pun, which he perpetrated with an immobility of countenance the ludicrousness of which redeemed the flatness of his humor.

Dixie glanced across the room at the card-players and surreptitiously nodded his head.

"What ye got, pard?" asked one of the players, taking his cue.

"A king full," replied the gambler, laying his hand down on the table.

The miner rose and yelled furiously.

"By God! You're cheatin'! You've been hand-in' me a cold deck!"

"You're a liar, damn you!"

The miner instantly drew a pistol, the gambler grappled with him and the two went to the floor together, apparently fighting like a pair of belligerent roosters, overturning the tables and several chairs, and scattering cards, bottles and glasses in all directions. As the men fell, the miner's pistol went off, the bullet harmlessly imbedding itself in the ceiling. The negro porter rushed up to Smithers, who was coolly surveying the combat, and grasped him by the arm.

"Dar dey goes again, boss! What'd I tell you all? Hunt a hole, boss, hunt a hole! Dar's a sho 'nuff scrimmage comin' now, an' dey all gwine ter shoot somethin' promiskus!"

Smithers was cool and imperturbable, and Sam let go of his arm and ran upstairs as if he feared for his life.

A number of the men drew guns, and everybody

started for places of safety. Some dodged beneath the tables; others upset tables and got behind them; the greater number hid behind the bar. Those who had pulled guns, peered out from their points of vantage and fired shot after shot at the walls and into the floor, pretending the while to be shooting at anybody and everybody in sight.

Now Smithers obviously was not an excitable person; apparently, also, he was not a timid sort. The boys at the Miners' Rest that night were pretty shrewd judges of human nature, but for once, they had made an egregious mistake in sizing up their man.

It is perhaps unfair to disappoint the reader of this narrative, who naturally expects at this point the revelation that Smithers was a British nobleman in disguise, who was touring the west in search of adventure, but truth compels the narrator to acknowledge that his nobility was of the natural, not the titular sort. He was just a plain British citizen, the son of a moderately prosperous London tradesman, who had invaded the West for purely commercial reasons.

Underlying the Englishman's psychology, however, was the spirit that has characterized the Briton the world over. It was this spirit that made Braddock's men obey orders and stand in serried ranks to be shot down by savages; it conquered India; it planted the Union Jack of Old England on the heights of Abraham; it died at Balaklava and at Lucknow; many years later it stood at parade on the Royal Victoria and went down with the ship; still later, it obeyed fool orders, or waved a pitiful little tin sword and gave orders, while the Mauser bullets of the Boers were aiding the flower of the British army

to bravely and uselessly sacrifice their lives—and but yesterday it fired the souls of the gallant thousands who fought against the Kaiser's hordes.

Had those American pioneers at the Miners' Rest reflected a little, they would have remembered that the spirit of Old England underlay the reckless bravery of many of them. But they did not remember this, and as Dixie sagely, if tritely, remarked, they learned that night that "it ain't safe ter figure out how far a cat kin jump by jest lookin' at it."

Smithers deliberately stepped to the center of the room, planted his monocle firmly in place, and drew from his pocket a small pearl-handled revolver.

"How extraor'nary, really!" he drawled, as he cocked his pistol and calmly looked about him in search of a target.

"Here, you fellers!" cried Dixie, excitedly, from behind his barricade of an overturned table, "dowse the glim, somebody, quick! That damned tenderfoot's comin' into the game!"

"Ah! there you are!" exclaimed the tenderfoot, deliberately firing at the miner.

Dixie promptly went back to cover, and amid a fusillade of shots the lights went out, leaving the place in total darkness.

Smithers did not seem to mind the interruption caused by the shooting out of the lights, but popped away until he had fired five more shots, and then continued snapping the pistol as if he thought its chambers were inexhaustible.

Dixie carefully counted the petulant explosions of the diminutive gun.

"Six! boys," he cried. "Guess the game's about

played, unless he's got another pop-gun. Light up, Joe."

McGinnis produced several extra lamps and lighted them, disclosing the Englishman still standing in the middle of the room, holding his smoking pistol in one hand and fumbling after his dangling monocle with the other.

"My word!" he drawled, "How extraor'nary, really!"

At this moment Tom Horton appeared at the door and took in the scene. He strode into the room and glanced searchingly at the crowd.

"What in hell's goin' on here," he demanded, "a Fourth o' July celebration?"

Smithers dawdled up to the sheriff and peered at him inquiringly through his eye-glass.

"Ah, my good friend; do you happen by any chawnce to have any spare ammunition about you?"

Everybody's face wore a broad grin. From behind the table Dixie caught the sheriff's eye and winked prodigiously. Horton comprehended and had a tremendous battle with his own risibilities.

"Ammunition?" he snorted, with a comical glance at the Englishman's pistol. "Nary a pea; just got back from shootin' hummin' birds."

"It's all right boys; come out," he called to the miners. "He's out o' ca'tridges."

The men, guns in hand, cautiously emerged from their hiding places, looking as sheepish as only practical jokers on whom the tables have been turned can look.

"Put up that cannon, Mr.—whatever yer name is," commanded the sheriff.

"W. Ponsonby Smithers, at your service, sir."

"Thanks, Mr. Smithers. As I was sayin', put up yer cannon. The game's over. Five minutes is the limit."

"But," said Smithers, looking concernedly at his revolver, "it's so blasted hot, don'tcher know, that it might bally well burn me trousers."

"All right," laughed Horton, "cool her off, then."

Sam now stuck his woolly head over the balustrade at the top of the stairway and surveyed the scene, his eyes rolling as if he were frightened half to death.

"Is dey all through wid dat promiskus gun-play, Mistah Sheriff?"

"All through, Sam. Come down an' count noses. Line up there, ye damned lobsters!"

A number of the men stood in line and Sam proceeded to count them.

"One, two, three, fo' "—here he lapsed into a fit of abstraction—"fo' 'leben fo'ty-fo'—"

"Come out of it, ye black rascal!" cried Horton.

"Eh, oh yes," resumed Sam, dreamily, "five, six —come seven—good 'leben—"

The sheriff gave him a stiff punch in the ribs.

"See here, nigger, what d'ye think ye're doin'; shootin' craps?"

"Eh? Oh, 'scuse me, Mistah Sheriff," Sam rambled on, "seben—come 'long good seben—why, dey's one missin', Mistah Sheriff! Dat's what comes o' dis yere promiskus shootin'!"

At this point the negro caught a glimpse of a hairy face in the far corner of the room, peeking out of the cellar, the trap door of which the miner was tentatively raising with his head.

"So, dar yo is, Mistah Jim Brown! Climb out o' dat cellar, an' come heah an' git yo'self counted."

The miner emerged from his underground refuge, and lined up with the rest of the crowd.

"Eight! Done got 'em all, Mistah Sheriff!" snickered Sam.

During the business of checking up, Smithers looked on in open-mouthed amazement, alternately adjusting his monocle and gazing wonderingly at his undersized gun.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed; "quite extraor'nary, really! I'm sure I discharged me piece six times, don'tcher know? I cawn't understand it, I really cawn't!"

The crowd went into spasms at this näive statement.

"Huh! It's damned lucky the lights went out, Ponsy, old sox," chuckled Dixie, "you'd ha' busted a tooth or peppered an eye for somebody, sure."

"The gentleman's score is entirely excusable," interposed the sheriff. "He ain't used ter shootin' in the dark, but I'm ashamed o' you fellers, an' Smithers has got ye all beat fer sand."

"An' that's no dream, ye rascals," he added in an aside.

"Put away yer guns, ye miserable duffers!" continued Horton. "You win, Mister Smithers. Let me congratulate ye; you've got 'em all beat a city block."

"He sure has," yelled everybody in chorus. "We knew he was all right!"

"How extraor'nary, really!" observed Smithers, critically peering at the crowd through his eyepiece.

Dixie whacked the Englishman on the back and again knocked the breath out of him, sending his monocle flying.

"You're a dead game sport, old boy!"

Smithers regained his breath after a brief struggle and recovered his eye-glass, which was dancing at the end of its string.

"Am I, really? Thanks, awfully, old chap. An' if I've won, I suppose it would be good form to ask you all to have a drink, don'tcher know."

Smithers repaired to the bar and everybody in the room, except Sam, lined up two deep for the libation. The negro stood in the middle of the room, thirstily surveying the scene and rolling his eyes in piteous entreaty at McGinnis, until the latter roared at him the gentle reminder that if he did not assist in serving the crowd, a certain "nigger's" head was "goin' ter be busted."

"Bar-keeper," said Smithers, "let's have a little rye, all around."

When the glasses were filled, McGinnis took pity on Sam, set out a bottle and glasses on the end of the bar and called to the negro:

"Here, Sam, ye lazy scut! Ye're in on this wan."

Sam helped himself to a huge drink and was in the act of pouring it down his parched, capacious gullet, when McGinnis caught sight of the brimming glass.

"Ye black swine!" he yelled, "d'ye want a towel for that bath?"

"No, sah," chuckled Sam, "I dries out right quick—quicker dan mos' folks. I'se a warm baby, I is."

The crowd laughed at the negro's retort, touched glasses and drank. Sam tossed off his drink, smacked his thick lips, wiped his mouth with the back of a fat, black paw and went to work with a will, washing glasses and putting the room to rights.

"What's the matter with Ponsy?" shouted a miner.

"He's all right!" howled the crowd.

"Who's all right?" cried somebody.

"Ponsy!" was the answering yell.

"Come on, boys," cried Dixie, "let's take our new pard here ter the show. We might as well finish the evenin' right, while we're about it."

The boys hustled for the door, followed by Dixie and Smithers, who went out arm in arm.

Dixie turned at the door and called to Horton:

"Won't ye come along, Tom? We may need the sheriff ter keep order."

"Thanks, no," retorted the sheriff, satirically, "you ain't a goin' t' need me. You lobsters couldn't hit a flock o' barns. But," he laughed, "I'm mighty glad that Mr. Smithers is out o' ammunition."

With his wonted calmness and deliberation, Smithers fixed a monocled stare on Horton and looked him over from top to toe.

"Most extraor'nary, really! Rawther odd sort o' chap, that, don'tcher know."

As the strangely assorted pair disappeared, Horton and McGinnis fairly shrieked with merriment.

"Don't that beat ye, Joe?" gasped Horton. "What do ye think o' that for a tenderfoot?"

"Tinderfoot? Hell!" exploded McGinnis. "If that Britisher iver learns ter handle a .44, Oi'll back him agin th' whole town, bedad! Lord! if he only had a little rale ould Irish blood in him!"

"He don't need any mixin' o' blood, Mac," said Horton, gravely. "That kind o' tenderfoot has made a whole lot o' hist'ry, an' they're makin' it yet. Some feller wrote a poem once about a gang o' the same kind o' suckers that went up against a

lot o' big cannons, just because some damned fool made a mistake an' give 'em the wrong orders. There was six hundred of 'em went in, an' there wasn't a corporal's guard come out. They was all shot ter hell.

"I'm beginnin' ter understand that 'Rule Britannia' business them Englishmen sings about, a little better'n I used ter," he went on, "an' say, Joe," he chuckled, "that damned galoot hollered for more ca'tridges! What d'ye think o' that? Wonder if he'd like a job as dep'ty sheriff?"

"Holy Saint Patrick!" shouted McGinnis, convulsed with merriment, "he'd scare th' whole town ter death, bedad!"

There was a rustle of skirts and Mrs. McGinnis and Ellen appeared at the door.

"He'd have troubles of his own scarin' this party that's comin', eh, Mac?" whispered the sheriff.

"Moses an' the prophets, Tom!" muttered McGinnis, "here's where I git mine. She's got blood in her oye. If Oi'd only got the place cleaned up a bit before she got home!"

"Wait here a minute, darlin'," said Mrs. McGinnis to her daughter.

The woman belligerently advanced toward the two men, suspiciously sniffing the air and angrily viewing the evidences of the recent rough-house, which Sam had not yet had time to remove.

"Howdy, Sheriff?" she said, stiffly, and then like an enraged Amazon confronted her husband.

"Pfwat's been goin' on here, Joe McGinnis?"

Mine host looked as if he had been caught with a dead sheep over his shoulder.

"W—why—nothin', Molly dear."

His wife again sniffed the smoke-laden air and

glared about her at the awful disorder of the room.

"Nothin', eh?" she roared; "d'ye think Oi'm blind, an' that me nose is par'lyzed? Where'd all the powder smoke come from, hey?"

"Run along upstairs, acushla," she called to her daughter.

"Yes, mother," replied the girl, sympathetically glancing at her father, upon whom, in spite of his rough exterior, she really doted.

Mrs. McGinnis shook a by no means delicate fist menacingly under the stalwart Irishman's nose.

"So, thim dirty blackguards have been shootin' up the place agin, eh?"

"Just a little sport the boys was havin', that's all, ma'am," soothingly interposed Horton.

She turned upon the sheriff and blazed indignantly:

"Shport! eh? Shport! It ain't your put in, Tom Horton. I'll tell yez wan thing, ye big loafer," she raged, returning to the sheepish McGinnis, "if yez can't keep this place respictable whin me back's turned, I'll give ye a chance ter git another job!"

Sam was industriously polishing a tumbler and trying to look composed. When the lady intimated that she might fire McGinnis, in his trepidation he dropped the glass to the floor, smashing it into fragments that flew all over the room. The irate woman furiously turned upon the negro.

"An' you, too, ye big, clumsy, black gorilla, ye!"

Sam was so awe-stricken that he could only stand helplessly looking at her with his cavernous mouth agape, rolling his eyes like a couple of enormous, agitated marbles.

"Yis, Molly dear, but—" McGinnis began, cajolingly.

"Don't yez 'Molly dear' me agin, ye big shpalpeen! That beloved husband business don't go with me—just remimber that. If yez had ter do some rale wurruk fer a livin' fer a little while, maybe ye'd appreciate the soft shnap ye've got."

A violent fit of coughing diverted the lady's attention from her thoroughly cowed better-half.

"Sam, ye black thief o' the wurruld!" she cried, as soon as she could speak, "open all thim windows an' let that vile shmoke out. It's that thick yez could cut it with a knife."

The negro obeyed, meanwhile warily keeping an eye on her as though he expected things to be thrown at him. Having opened the windows, he quietly sneaked out of the back door.

Mrs. McGinnis now returned to the attack.

"Joe McGinnis, ye can tell that gang o' loafers an' toughs that hangs out here iv'ry night, that hereafter they can buy their drinks an' git out. I'll have no more o' that gun business, an' pfwat's more, ye can tell 'em that if there's any more of it in this place, I'll take a hand mesilf with a mop shtick."

She turned a scornful eye on Horton:

"If the sheriff hain't got sand enough in his craw to kape the loafers an' bums o' this town in order *I* have. D'ye hear that Misther Tom Horton?"

With a final look of withering contempt at the thoroughly subdued victims of her wrath, the boss of the Miners' Rest majestically stalked upstairs.

Horton ostentatiously lit his pipe and said nothing for a space.

"It's a warm evenin', Mac," he finally observed slyly, between puffs.

McGinnis produced a large red handkerchief, drew

it across his perspiring brow and grinned in shame-faced fashion.

"Thrue for you, Misther Horton," he agreed; "I disremimber iver seein' any weather in th' Hills that was quite so war—rm."

Chapter XXV

LUCK STRIKES THE HOUSE OF McGINNIS

One sultry August afternoon, some weeks after the lively reception tendered to Smithers by certain playful citizens of Deadwood, Tom Horton had occasion to visit the Miner's Rest in quest of information as to the whereabouts of a party who, for obvious reasons was not especially anxious to meet the sheriff.

As the matter at issue was certain horses that had been found to be illegally in the aforesaid party's possession and had been identified as the property of one of his fellow-townsmen, and the penalty for horse stealing in the west having been amicably agreed upon by honest men of all classes, the person for whom the sheriff was seeking hardly could be blamed for being somewhat coy and retiring. He was the less blamable because the jail at Deadwood was a flimsy affair which offered inadequate shelter from lynching parties.

It was not "stage day" and the miners were still at work, hence business was dull at McGinnis' ever-popular bar. Only an occasional citizen who belonged to the limited class of the unemployed, dropped in to quench a chronic dryness of the throat, made more avid by the hot weather and the idleness that always lead the victim of that

particular form of thirst toward him of the suave smile and white apron.

McGinnis stood behind the bar alternately wiping the sweat from his perspiring, red face, and vigorously cursing Sam, who was peacefully dozing in a chair tipped back against the wall in a remote corner of the room, his cavernous mouth wide open in a fashion most enticing to the industrious swarms of flies that were buzzing about, and his thick lips blubbering with his raucous breathing.

Nobody had been in for some time, and finding that his peppery vocabulary had disturbed Sam not in the least, McGinnis seated himself on a convenient beer keg and followed the negro's philosophic example.

Hardly had mine host dropped off into a doze punctuated by snores that sounded like a blowing hippopotamus, when he was aroused by the entrance of one of those irresponsible bums who are the especial thorns in the sides of the presiding geniuses of all well-regulated drink-parlors, the world over.

McGinnis half opened his eyes and glared malignantly at the disreputable-looking disturber of his peace and comfort who, with the besotted stupidity of the alcoholic down-and-out, foolishly disregarded the danger signal.

"Say, Mac," he whined, "blow a feller off ter some nose-paint, won't ye? I hain't had a drink all day, an' I'm burnin' up."

McGinnis slowly rose to his feet. There was a tinge of joy in his resentment of the interruption of his siesta. Here was an opportunity to get out of his system the irritation produced by the annoyances of the day, that the Irishman would not have

missed for the world. His black helper usually attended to such cases, but this one!—

"Oi'd see yez in hell first!" he thundered, so emphatically that Sam awoke with a start, his teeth coming together with a loud snap which was quite demoralizing to the flies, and blinked sleepily at the subsequent proceedings.

"Ah! Have a heart, Mac. Just one finger," quavered the bum.

"Oi've told yez twinty toimes that the shlate is broke! Git out o' here, damn ye!"

McGinnis was so eager to vent his spleen on whoever was handiest that he did not wait to see whether the bum would obey orders or not, but grabbing the fellow by the collar and the slack of his trousers, hustled him to the open door and with a vigorous application of a ponderous dexter foot, sent him flying clear into the middle of the street, where with a loud grunt he landed in a sitting position in the ankle-deep dust and sat dazedly looking about him as if he were not quite certain what had happened.

As his boss crumpled up the unfortunate bum and threw him out of the door, Sam chuckled softly to himself.

"De Irish troops done fit noble; dey sho'ly did!"

Having thus officially rendered his expert approval of the manner in which his employer had attended to the porter's duty, the negro peacefully resumed his slumbers.

McGinnis surveyed with grim satisfaction the human wreckage he had so summarily ejected.

"There, ye scum o' the earth! How d'ye loike the leather cocktail? Wan finger, eh? Wan foot is about your size, an' if ye come inter me place agin,

Oi'll thrun the boots inter yez right, an' don't ye fergit it!"

Horton came up just as the belligerent but now serenely contented Irishman was ostentatiously dusting his mighty hands, with a final glare at the luckless bum, who still was sitting in the street, stupidly gazing at a group of passers-by that had gathered on the opposite side of the way and evidently were hugely enjoying the scene.

The sheriff at a glance comprehended what had happened. He went to the social derelict and helped him to his feet.

"Pull yer freight, my friend," said he, not unkindly, "an' keep away from this end o' town hereafter. It ain't good fer you."

"Funny, ain't it, boys?—I don't think!" he remarked, sarcastically, turning to the group of laughing men.

He entered the hotel, followed by McGinnis who, like the crowd in the street, was rather mystified by the sheriff's remark.

"Lettin' off steam, eh, Mac?" inquired Horton, when he and the Irishman had taken their orthodox relative positions on opposite sides of the bar.

"Just a little, Misther Sheriff," grinned McGinnis. "That damned bum gits on me nerves, an' Oi made up me moind ter settle him, this toime."

There was an odd light in Horton's eyes as he replied, reminiscently:

"I remember that pore devil, Yank Billings, when he first struck this town—that was before your day, Joe. When he landed here, he looked just about th' same as th' rest of us—only a bit more ter the spruce. He come from a farm, somewheres down in the little old state o' Maine. Never saw much o' the world

till he left the old home, I reckon. Anyhow, I'll bet he didn't buck agin no faro banks or women—an' no gin-mills, Joe, down at The Corners. He jest couldn't face the music here in this place, that's all."

McGinnis looked bewilderedly at the Sheriff, who went on with his homily.

"Now, I ain't no philos'pher, an' I ain't had none too much learnin,' Mac, but I've jest about concluded that when the Almighty hands out the man-stuff to us, He gives jest a little bit more stiff'nin' ter some fellers than he does ter others. I don't want ter knock yer bizness, Joe, fer the hand that passes out the booze helps ter feed fellers in my perfession, but I'm thinkin' that p'raps it would ha' been better fer Yank if ye'd ha' give him th' boot before he got broke. I've noticed that with some folks a booze-fighter ain't never a 'bum' till he's plumb busted."

Both the ironical shaft and the homely philosophy that preceded it, went clear over McGinnis's head.

"Thrue for you, Sheriff, an' begorra! as yez caught me in th' act o' committin' assault an' battery—"

"An' throwin' 'bums', Joe," interrupted Horton.

"Be the piper! that was a good wan, Misther Horton!" exclaimed McGinnis, admiringly.

"Thankee, Mac, ye was about ter remark—"

"I was goin' ter say—though not by way o' bribin' an' officer o' the law, sorr—that wan on the house was comin' t' yez."

"If it *is* a bribe, I'll stand for it, Joe. A little dust-dissolver—jest the right dose, so that I won't get full o' mud—an' I'll acquit ye of all criminal intent."

McGinnis produced the requisite fluids and the

two men duly irrigated their respective departments of the interior.

Horton "bought" in turn, and the social amenities thus having been duly observed, he proceeded to interrogate McGinnis as to his knowledge of the whereabouts of the horse-thief.

"Begorra!" said McGinnis, cunningly, "Oi've been hearin' a lot o' talk about Pete Sloan fer the lasht wake. Some says wan thing, an' some says another, but divil a bit o' sense kin Oi make out of it all."

"Oh, I see," replied the sheriff, dryly, "Which means that you ain't lost no horses, eh, Mac?"

"Divil a wan, sorr, divil a wan."

"Nor yer nerve, either, Joe."

"Sorra a bit, Tom."

"You're a damned good business man, McGinnis."

"D'ye think so, sorr? Oi'm glad to hear ye say that, Misther Sheriff."

"Oh, it's comin' to ye, Mac."

"Thankee, sorr."

"By the way, Joe, Bill Harkins and Pete Sloan are pretty good friends, ain't they?"

"Well, t' tell yez the truth, now, Misther Horton, I couldn't say. Don't b'lieve that Bill iver said innythin' about Pete, but maybe he has at that, sorr; maybe he has."

Horton was too wise to question the wily and discreet McGinnis any further.

"All right, Mac, we'll let it go at that. An' if ye ever want a recommend as a diplermat, come ter yours truly."

"Thankee, Sheriff, thankee," replied McGinnis, gratefully, without in the least knowing what a diplomat was.

"Yes, yer a diplermat, all right, Mac, but I'm a goin' ter get that feller, Sloan, just the same."

"That'll bark no hide off'n my shins, Misther Horton, yez kin jist bank on that."

"I've got ye, Joe. I know yer on the level, even if ye don't talk as free as some folks. Reckon yer all right at that."

Horton, however, did not get the horse thief. A party of cowboys caught the malefactor a few days later and saved the sheriff a lot of bother. The verdict of the coroner's jury ran something like this:

"Died from havin' too much air under his feet, an' too little in his breathe-works."

A woman's voice was heard at the door. Horton suddenly jumped as if somebody had jabbed a pin into him, but pulled himself together and with affected indifference went to the cracker and cheese box at the end of the bar, helped himself and munched away as if he were not sure of getting his supper and proposed to forestall a possible disappointment in that direction.

McGinnis looked expectantly toward the door and saw Miss Weatherson and Bob Parker enter and pass behind the screen into the hotel office.

"It was very kind of you to see me home, Mr. Parker," said the young woman, gratefully, offering her hand.

"Yes, I *was* good—to one Bob Parker," he replied, clasping the slim white fingers and gallantly bowing over them.

"Be careful, now," she laughed, warningly, "this is not the effete east, you know."

"For which I am duly thankful—and because of which I can be really sincere, Miss Weatherson."

"Which remark was merely by way of emphasis, of course, Mr. Parker."

"Certainly, and by way of leading up to a very vital question. May I call tomorrow evening?"

"Mrs. McGinnis's stuffy parlor again?" she answered, merrily. "Never! But I'll gladly compromise with you. Call for me after school and escort me home. My star pupil, Ellen, will chaperon us."

"Thank you," he laughed, "but not for the chaperon."

"Ah, but the chaperon is unavoidable," she replied, archly. "Ellen has formally appointed herself to the office. She had just left me and run on ahead when you caught up with me a while ago."

"The little lady didn't know I was coming, of course."

"I am not quite sure as to that. *Au revoir,*" and the young woman tripped lightly up the stairs.

He followed her with ardent eyes until she disappeared, then with a despondent sigh and a gesture of self-depreciation walked slowly toward the entrance of the bar-room.

"Ye kin guess who's comin', Sheriff. I'll give yez jist wan guess," chaffed McGinnis.

"I'm not good at guessin', Joe, an' my ears are mighty bad," said Horton, adding in an aside which escaped the Irishman, "sometimes—thank God!"

As Parker entered the bar-room, Horton, generous fellow and sincere friend that he was, rushed to meet him and grasped both his hands in his own.

"Well, Bob, I thought sure ye'd cut stick an' left us fer good! Where in blue blazes have ye been fer the last three days?"

"As that distinguished member of the Sons of Rest over yonder would say," replied Parker, point-

ing at the sleeping negro, " 'I've jes' been projeckin' round a little.' "

"I should think ye had," said Horton, noting that his friend wore a riding outfit and was covered with dust. "Ye look like a picture of a feller on the high road hit by a cyclone. When did ye git back?"

"I struck town about an hour ago. And how is old Tom?"

"Fine as a cotton hat, Bob."

Parker turned to McGinnis.

"And how goes it with you, Mac?"

"Bully! Misther Parker—bully!"

"And the Missus, Joe?"

"Foine, sorr, foine, barrin' a little spell o' dishposition, now an' thin. She ain't niver quite got over the last tinderfoot reciption, an' as she's took Mr. Ponsonby Smithers under her wing, she hands me wan ivry wonst in a while about us ignoramuses not knowin' how to trate a rale gintleman at all, at all. Not that she loikes the English bucko—which she don't so that yez could notice it, so yez needn't be jealous, Misther Horton—but he'll do as well as inny wan fer an excuse fer family ructions."

"And where do you come in, Tom?" queried Parker.

"Oh, I've been doin' a thinkin' part, an' keepin' away from this dump as much as I could. I got enough o' Mrs. Mac's opinions o' yours truly, the night o' the English tenderfoot's party, ter last me fer a while." Horton snickered at the recollection.

"So I heard, Tom," smiled Parker; "that's what a man who is supposed to officially uphold the law gets for being an accessory to hazing a poor tenderfoot."

"I wasn't no 'accessory,' I was referee," chuckled

Horton. "But say, Bob, the very looks o' you makes me dry. Doc McGinnis, let's have some more o' that famous dust-dispeller o' yourn—an' give this crazy Indian some o' yer strongest soda water."

McGinnis produced the thirst-alleviators and the two friends filled their glasses.

"Get in the game, Mac," invited Horton.

"Sure an' Oi don't mind if I do."

McGinnis poured a libation for himself, and the liquid volley was fired by the party with due regard to the traditional customs and etiquette of the bar spirituous.

"What did ye dig up, Bob?" interrogated Horton. "Ye was gone so long that I didn't know but ye'd be comin' back with the mother lode in yer pocket."

"Haven't struck dear old mamma yet, Tom, although, as our mutual friend, Smithers, would say, 'I have me hopes.' But I made a pretty good bag at that. Incidentally I proved that that fellow Atherton is a skunk of the first odor."

"Oh, is he though?" asked Horton. "He never did look good ter me, but I wondered if I wasn't sufferin' from an attack o' sleuthitis. What's he been doin', an' where, an' when, an' at what time does the sheriff o' Deadwood take a hand?"

"It's not your play—yet," responded Parker, "but I guess you'd better stick around, at that. If this town ever really discovers that fellow's true character, you may have to save one perfectly fine villain from being mussed up by an enraged populace."

"So, that's the lay, is it? Tell us about it, Bob."

"Hold your horses, Tom," said Parker. "We'll let you have the road in a minute. By the way, Mac," he asked, casually, "what did Atherton offer

Mrs. McGinnis for that prospect hole that she took for Dixie's board bill?"

"Foive hundred—an' it's highway robbery ter take it, but that Noo Yarker's twinty-wan years old, an' oughter have his eye teeth cut by this toime, so Oi told th' ould woman ter take him up, begorra."

"So, you think it would be robbery to take his five hundred, do you, Mac?" queried Parker, amusedly, finishing his soda and setting down his empty glass.

"Oi sure do, an' pfwat the divil the ould woman sint yez off on that wild goose chase fer, is more'n the loikes o' me kin guess."

"Because she's got the brains o' the family, Joe," put in Horton.

"Begorra, Sheriff! Oi'm thinkin' yer right—barrin', av course, th' kid," laughed McGinnis.

"But where is Mrs. McGinnis, Joe?" asked Parker.

"She an' Ellen come in a little while ago an' they both wint up-shtairs."

"Ask her to come down, Mac. I have some news for her."

"Well," said McGinnis, doubtfully, "seein' it's yerself, an' ye have somethin' partic'lar ter say to her, Oi'll call her down, but it's on yer own responsibility, Misther Parker, moind that, now. She's been a bit peevish lately, eh, Sheriff?"

"Just a little bit, Joe," chuckled Horton.

McGinnis went to the foot of the stairs and called: "Molly dear."

"Huh!" Mrs. McGinnis acidly replied a moment later from the head of the stairs. "It's 'Mollie dearin'' me ye are agin, eh? Pfwat divilment are yez plannin' now, I wonder."

The Irishman dodged an imaginary missile, stepped around the partition into the bar-room and said, in a horse whisper:

"The Lord help ye, Misther Parker, if ye hain't got some good news fer the ould woman! Oi know th' symptoms, an' Oi'm afther thinkin' it's cloudin' up."

Winking at Parker and Horton he again called to the companion of his joys and dispenser of his troubles:

"Misther Parker is back, Molly dear, an' he says will yez plaze come down."

"Sure, an' is it Misther Parker that wants ter see me? Av course Oi'll come down!"

The lady joyfully descended the stairs, the men passing into the hotel office and meeting her just as she was about to enter the bar-room. Pointedly ignoring Horton, Mrs. McGinnis regally swept up to Parker and gave him a cordial handshake.

"Good afthernoon, Misther Parker, an' are yez back agin, safe an' sound?"

"As well as a fish, Mrs. McGinnis, and twice as happy."

"Bob's always well—an' sometimes happy," ventured Horton, tentatively.

Putting her arms akimbo, Mrs. McGinnis turned and icily looked Horton over as if she had just become conscious of his presence and was not quite sure of his identity.

"So," she sneered, "ye're here agin, are yez, Misther Tom Horton? It do be aisier wor-r-k holdin' up McGinnis's bar than chasin' horse thieves—an' a whole lot safer."

Horton bowed in as courtly a fashion as any cav-

alier could have done, his huge felt hat, which he held in his hand, almost sweeping the floor.

"You sure are some good guesser, ma'am," he grinned.

"Let's not start a guessing school," interposed Parker, good-humoredly. "I inspected your mine, as I promised to do, Mrs. McGinnis. Just as I suspected, that fellow Atherton had obtained some inside information and had been doing a little investigating on his own hook. I had sized him up as a shark and I was sure that something was wrong as soon as I heard that he had made you that generous offer. Atherton is a graduate of Wall Street, where one or two thousand per cent is considered a legitimate rake-off—for the insider. He hasn't quite got the smell of the Street off him yet. He was play ing you for a sure thing, Mrs. McGinnis."

"Pfwat's that? A sure thing!" she exclaimed, bewilderedly, "an' pfwat iver d'yez mane by that, sorr?"

"I mean," he quietly replied, "that there's a good million in that mine, if there's a red cent."

"Glory be!" cried the delighted woman. "Oi'll hug ye fer that, Misther Parker!"

She was as good as her word and almost strangled the young man in her vigorous expression of appreciation. Just as he was on the verge of asphyxia, she let go of his neck and turned her attention to her husband, who was too overcome to utter a sound.

"Come out of it, y' ould fool ye!" she cried, shaking him violently and pounding him on the back till he was blue in the face. "D'yez hear that, ye blitherin' numskull, ye? D'ye hear that, ould man? We're rich as Crocus! An' now Ellen can have a

pi-anny—an' she kin go to wan o' thim varnishin' schools, God bless her!"

McGinnis partially regained his breath.

"Yer not sthringin' us, Misther Parker?" he gasped.

"Not the least bit," replied Parker, heartily, you're on the highroad to wealth, Mac, old boy."

The Irishman grabbed the young man's hand and squeezed it until the bones cracked.

"Hooray! No more worruk fer Joseph McGinnis, Esquire!"

"No more pfwat?" sneered his wife, coldly.

"No more tindin' bar!"

"An' yez call that worruk, do yez? Oi'll have yez understand that th' worruk o' *this* house is done on this soide o' that partition. D' yez remimber pfwat Oi was afther sayin' ter ye th' night whin—"

"Come, come," interposed Parker, conciliatorily, "you folks would better take a belated honeymoon, when you have sold the mine, and adjust your differences after you get out of town."

With the emotional instability of her race and sex, Mrs. McGinnis suddenly burst into tears and threw herself into her husband's arms.

"Sure, an' Misther Parker is right, Joe!" she sobbed, "but whin we take our honeymoon, we'll not be afther worryin' our fool heads about inny differences at all at all."

"See here, Bob," whispered Horton, "are you dead sure about that prospect hole? It never looked good to me, an' I ain't just exactly a raw one, ye know."

"I don't blame you for being skeptical, Tom, but it's a cinch, just the same. The whole lot of you, Dixie in particular, overlooked a bet, that's all, and,

to give the devil his due, I'm not sure that Atherton doesn't deserve a discoverer's medal at that, the infernal scalawag!"

"Well, fer a feller that's been down on his luck, you're some freak when it comes ter findin' fortunes fer other folks, Bob."

"Yes, Tom, but it's easier to sit in judgment on other folk's prospects than on your own. All the same, what I've done for the McGinnises has given me more faith in myself. I'm going to strike it—and strike it rich—before I'm done with the game. I'm sure that I'm right and have been headed right all the time."

"That's the stuff, Bob!" exclaimed Horton, affectionately putting a hand on his friend's shoulder.

Mrs. McGinnis released her husband and drying her eyes on her apron, sniveled:

"There ain't no mishtake about it, Misther Parker?"

"No, my good friend, there can be no mistake. I acquired more than a smattering of mining and minerals at college, as a practical working adjunct to my profession of engineering, and while I myself have been a rather unsuccessful digger, and am a little rusty, I still know a good thing in ore when once it's uncovered. The McGinnis family has the world by the horns. The claim is the kind that capitalists tumble all over themselves to get."

"The Lord bless ye, Misther Parker! Sure an' Oi must tell Ellen all about it!"

The excited woman started up the stairs on a run, exclaiming:

"Ellen! Oh, Ellen! Mavourneen! Where are yez?"

She stumbled when half way up the stairs and fell

down several steps. She must have been shaken and bruised considerably, but she rose to her feet and tore up the stairs as if bad falls to her were merely a pleasant and healthful diversion.

Parker followed as far as the foot of the stairs and shot a parting word of advice after her.

"Oh, by the way, Mrs. McGinnis! Keep the mine business to yourself, and caution Ellen to keep quiet. If Atherton approaches you again about the mine, say nothing of what I have told you. I'll attend to all that. Just turn him down, that's all."

"Turn him down, th' shpalpeen! Turn him down, is it?" she replied. "He'll be *knocked* down, an' Oi'll attind ter *that,* Misther Parker!"

"An' she will, too, an' don't ye fergit it," said her husband, with confidence born of sad experience.

"Come, gintlemin," McGinnis continued, with the dignified air befitting one whose fortunes had been touched by the magic hand of Midas, "ye'll be afther indulgin' in some o' the besht in th' house, as speshul guists an' frinds o' the proprietor, th' Honorable Misther Joseph McGinnis, Esquire."

With the pompous carriage of a drum-major, he led the way to the bar, lining up with his two friends in front of it.

"Sam, ye lazy divil, ye!" he roared at the negro, who was sitting in his accustomed chair and, as usual, comatose, "shtir yer clumsy monkey shtumps an' ser-r-ve us gintlemin with some refrishmints!"

Sam awoke, and in wild-eyed amazement rushed to the rear of the bar and set out the drinks.

"Are yer glasses filled, gintlemin?"

"All ready, sir," chorused Parker and Horton, raising their glasses.

"Thin here's t' the—the—pfwat the divil was that

ye said th' McGinnis family was on, Misther Parker?"

"The high-road to wealth, sir," replied the young man, gravely.

"That's it, sorr, that's it! Well gintlemin, here's ter th' high-road ter wilth!"

"An' now, gintlemin," said McGinnis, looking at his watch, which resembled a town clock, "it's almost supper toime an'—"

"Tea time, Mr. McGinnis," corrected Parker, soberly.

Ah! yis, so 'tis. Thank ye, Misther Parker. Well, as I was afther sayin', it's almost tay toime, an' it would give great plisure ter me wife an' daughther an' mesilf, if yez would take tay wid us."

The two friends accepted the invitation and their host led the way to a table near by and asked them to be seated, pending meal-time.

"Samuel," he ordered, "fetch us some seegars—some o' them speshuls, in the box under th' bar."

The porter obeyed and the party lit their cigars and settled down for a brief smoke.

Sam started out of the door at the rear of the bar-room, leading to the dining room.

"Samuel," called McGinnis, "yez'll plaze be afther notifyin' us whin tay is sarved."

"Yes, boss," and the bewildered Sam, with eyes bulging like a couple of white, black-centered door-knobs, backed through the door and disappeared.

Chapter XXVI

HORTON HEARS SOME INTERESTING THINGS AND CENSORS THE PRESS

The guests and regular boarders at the bountiful table of the Miners' Rest that memorable evening were conscious of an unwonted tension in the air.

The unusual dignity and pompousness affected by Mr. McGinnis were noted by all, and even those who were ignorant of the causes that underlay them, found his "uppish" airs very entertaining. Some of the diners had considerable trouble in restraining outward expression of their humorous appreciation of mine host's ludicrous antics. Respect for his authority and physical prowess, rather than innate courtesy, possibly may have been largely responsible for the ability of some of the guests to preserve their gravity.

Parker and Horton slyly winked at each other several times, but aside from this surreptitious manifestation of interest, succeeded in looking unconcerned, although they were the most amused of the entire party.

Mrs. McGinnis was as red as a turkey cock, with suppressed emotions. Being naturally voluble, yet forbidden to talk about the wonderfully good fortune of the family, she underwent tortures all through the meal.

Ellen, too, was eagerly intense with suppressed

excitement, in which doubts of the authenticity of the good news and consequent fear of disappointment held a prominent place.

Sam relieved the situation a little by his awkwardness in waiting on the table. Between the poor fellow's natural clumsiness of movement and the bewilderment produced in his mind by the queer actions of his employers, the negro was having a hard time of it, and he was not made altogether unhappy by the explosions of temper with which Mrs. McGinnis greeted some of his ungainly maneuvers. When finally he stumbled and fell, spilling upon the floor a tray full of viands, with a resultant promiscous mixture of broken dishes, food and sprawling Ethiopian, everybody burst out in a loud guffaw which served as a timely safety-valve for their pent-up emotions.

The copious vials of wrath poured upon his devoted head by the irate Mrs. McGinnis and her equally infuriated spouse, whose dignity was for the moment quite forgotten, made the negro feel thoroughly at home once more.

The guests, too, were restored to their usual good spirits and equanimity, and finished their meal in the best of humor, joshing Sam most unmercifully and even venturing to take a few playful liberties with the doughty McGinnis himself, whose affectation of dignity now was completely shattered.

Parker and Horton pointedly enjoyed the situation, greatly to the mystification of Miss Weatherson, who sat between them, and to whom they had not confided the portentous secret of the windfall that had come to the house of McGinnis.

The meal finished, the male boarders repaired to the bar-room or to the veranda of the hotel to di-

vert themselves each in his own fashion, leaving the women of the household to attend to the dishes.

Having some papers to mark, the shool-teacher retired to her room, and did not reappear.

Parker and the sheriff provided themselves with chairs, seated themselves upon the veranda and proceeded to make themselves as comfortable with their pipes as the warm August evening permitted, commiserating poor McGinnis who, though he now was rich as "Crocus," would for some time be compelled to remain at his wearisome post and cater to the omnipresent and omnipotent Deadwood thirst.

Mrs. McGinnis and Ellen having finished their rather onerous domestic duties for the evening, repaired to the upper regions of the hotel. The young girl, however, evidently was unable to contain herself and shortly afterward quietly returned to the hotel office. Through the open door she saw the two friends, who were still sitting on the steps engaged in quiet conversation.

"Oh, Mr. Parker!" she called.

"Yes, my dear," answered the young man, "what can I do for you?"

"Won't you come here for just a moment, please? I want to speak to you."

"Surely I will, Ellen," and he knocked the ashes from his pipe and joined her.

"Say, Mr. Parker!" she whispered, eagerly, "is it really true about the mine? Are we really going to be rich?"

"No, little girl, not going to be—you *are* rich—and very rich."

"My! isn't it wonderful? And now I'm really going to school in the east, and study music, and have a grand piano, and pretty clothes, just like

in the fashion books and—why, Mr. Parker, it is just like a fairy tale!"

"Yes, little girl," smiled Parker, sympathetically, "and a Prince Charming may come—who knows?"

He looked up and saw Mr. W. Ponsonby Smithers standing at the door, undeniably swaying on his feet and gravely regarding Ellen and himself.

"If what I hear is true," he continued, "here he comes now. Two's company and—you know the rest, Ellen," he laughed, "so good night," and calling to Horton to join him, he entered the bar-room.

As he passed Smithers, Parker greeted him cordially.

"Evenin'—hic!—Mishter Parker," hiccoughed the Englishman, blinking as gravely as an owl

"Humph!" muttered the young man to himself, "I'm not so sure about the 'charming.' That fellow is learning the ropes mighty fast."

The miner and his friend, the sheriff, proceeded to the bar, where McGinnis was serving a number of thirsty patrons, and Smithers, putting on a bold front, accosted Ellen.

"Evenin', Mish—Mish—hic!—Ellen."

She did not at once comprehend the situation.

"Why were you not here for supper, Mr. Smithers, and where have you been all evening? You promised to teach me cribbage!" she said, reproachfully.

"Crib—cribbage," replied the Englishman, thickly; "obsolete, Mish McGinnish—hic!—obsolete!—hic!—po—poker's only fash—fash'nable game——what? Crib—cribbage! only blawsted, bloomin' tenderfootsh—hic!—play crib—cribbage. I'm not keen on tenderfootsh, don'tcher know, Mish—Mish—hic!—McGinnish."

The girl stared at him in horrified astonishment.

"Why, Mr. Smithers! You're intoxicated!"

The conversation between the young girl and her bibulous caller was plainly overheard by Parker and Horton and also by McGinnis, who was serving them with drinks at the end of the bar nearest the door.

The Irishman started to pass from behind the bar with the evident intention of belligerently aiding his daughter in the entertainment of her intoxicated visitor.

"Don't get stampeded, Mac," Horton laughingly interposed, "if that Englishman's talk ain't any more dangerous than his shootin', I reckon Ellen can keep up her end o' the gab-fest, all right."

"N—no, I'm not—not—hic!—intocshicated—not at all, Mish—Mish—hic!—McGinnish. Boys been fixin'—hic!—me bloomin' feetsh, that'sh all—sure, that'sh all, Mish—hic! Mish McGinnish!"

"I guess they're fixed all right," retorted Ellen, scornfully, "I fancy the boys have pickled most of the tenderness out of them. Good night—Mr. W. Ponsonby Smithers!" and, like an enraged princess of the realm, the young lady wrathfully swept up the stairs.

During the conversation Parker and Horton were quietly enjoying the passage at arms. McGinnis was compelled to struggle so violently with his desire to roar with delight that his face grew purple. The sheriff playfully jabbed him in the ribs.

"D'ye hear that, Joe? She's a chip off'n the old block. Ye see I was right, there ain't any pickled Englishman goin' ter git away with anything while there's a McGinnis on the job."

"Be the Lord!" chuckled McGinnis, proudly, "Oi

b'lave yer right, Sheriff. She sure did soak 'im a good wan that toime!"

Smithers blinked stupidly after the indignant Ellen for a moment and then entering the bar-room, wabbled up to the two friends, with whom McGinnis still was foregathered at the bar.

"Shay, fellers," he mouthed; "come on an'—hic! —lesh—have a—hic!—bloomin' night-cap, don'tcher —hic!—know."

"Sure yez kin have a night-cap," said McGinnis, grimly, coming round the end of the bar and taking Smithers by the arm. "An' yez kin have a foine soft bed along wid it, me laddie buck."

He led his intoxicated boarder towards the entrance of the hotel, a task which was not so easy as it looked, for the Englishman resisted to the best of his ability and, drunk though he was, showed a muscularity that astonished the burly Irishman and gave him about all he could attend to.

"But, I—hic!—shay, me good man!" protested Smithers, *en route,* "I don't want yer bloomin' bed —hic!—don'tcher know. What d'ye think I am, anyhow, a blawsted—hic!—tenderfootsh?"

McGinnis turned and winked at the two friends and puffed:

"Not on yer blawsted, bloomin' loife!"

The recalcitrant Smithers finally submitted to superior force and resignedly allowed his captor to conduct him upstairs to his room.

"Say, Bob," remarked Horton, as mine host and his captive disappeared, "it looks as if the McGinnises was in fer a son-in-law."

So I hear," laughed Parker. "Does Joe suspect it?"

"I should say not!" Horton roared. "Nobody

would dare ter even hint it ter McGinnis—let alone ter Mollie dear. An Englishman!—Holy mackerel! I wouldn't like ter be the man ter carry the news ter Mary."

"Well, as the old adage has it, the McGinnises might go farther and fare worse," rejoined Parker, seriously, "unless that fellow gets so thoroughly acclimated that he acquires the booze habit, and I don't think he will—Ellen will attend to that.

"Anyway," he laughed, "papa and mamma would better get into the band wagon. Ellen and the Englishman are going to have a bit of a row, but when they come to making up, they are going to get on thin ice—at least that's what usually happens in such cases."

"Not knowin', couldn't say, Bob, but *you'd* oughter know."

"Just as an onlooker, Tom," rejoined Parker, smilingly.

"By the way, Tom," he continued, "if Smithers ever marries Ellen and the girl is the least bit like her estimable mother, there's going to be a lot of poetic justice in the match. There's where Ireland will get even with Merrie England. It will be a case of home rule, all right—which nobody can deny."

"I wish him plenty o' joy," chuckled Horton. "Mrs. Mac is a sort of a bachelor's consolation—an' she's one hell of a fine specimen of a woman at that. I reckon Joe commenced wrong with her. But ye're right about one thing, Bob; the McGinnises might go a mighty long ways farther an' get nothin' but the worst o' the bargain."

"We are a little previous, anyway," observed Parker, "Smithers hasn't got the girl yet."

"It's a safe bet that he will get her, though," as-

serted Horton, "He's stuck on her an' he won't quit till he lands her, high an' dry. He's like the rest o' his breed, they stick like a pup to a root till they get what they're after. An' I'll bet ye somethin' else, Bob; that Johnny Bull ain't such a damn fool as he looks. He's like the singed cat they tell about, an' he ain't got through foolin' the people o' this little old town yet."

"From what the boys who initiated him say, he's a game bird, all right," commented Parker.

"Game! Why, he's game as a pebble, Bob. He'd face a Bengal tiger an' say, 'My word! What an extraor'nary large kitten! don'tcher know'—an' never sweat a hair. I've staked him to a real gun, an' I'm teachin' him ter shoot."

"I noticed that he was toting a .44. Why don't you get him to shed his monocle, Tom? I wonder how he stands having fun poked at it."

"Ye can't feaze him," chuckled Horton. "I'll get him ter quit wearin' that thing by an' by, though. I'll tell him he'll never make a gun-man unless he chucks that pane o' glass inter the discard."

"Well, Tom, for an Englishman, he is becoming Americanized pretty fast."

"Americanized! Say, Bob, ye'd jest oughter see that feller play poker! Ain't got no more expression than a Chink. He jest sets there an' keeps ye guessin', an' he's as cool as a Dakota winter—which is goin' some, as ye'll discover by an' by. The gang pretty near cleaned him out, first off, but he kep' on a poundin' away until he got the hang o' the game. He got a remittance from home the other day; the boys heard about it, an' the way they went after it was a sight ter see. They got him ter set in a game at Dutchy's joint a few nights ago, an' when he got

through with them wise guys they looked like the last run o' shad. When he left fer home every one o' them suckers was stony broke, an' Smithers was totin' a roll as big as a mule's hind leg. That roll's a layin' in McGinnis's safe, right this minute, I'll bet you a ten spot."

An inspiration suddenly struck Horton.

"See here, Bob, why don't ye hook up with the Englishman? He wants ter get inter the minin' game. With him as the capitalist in a small way, an' you ter do the hustlin', it would be a good thing fer both o' ye."

"You're bound to make him lose that bank roll, I see, Tom," laughed Parker.

"Don't believe he'll lose it, an' seein' as how it's a square business proposition ter put up to him, he'd get a run fer his money, anyhow, an' that's somethin'—in these diggin's."

"Very well, Tom, I'll think it over. Perhaps Dr. Horton's gold cure wouldn't hurt Smithers, anyway. Judging by my own experience in mining it would keep his mind off evil associations. That would help my conscience some if we lost out."

Breathing heavily and still perspiring from his exertions, McGinnis returned, resumed his place behind the bar and went to Sam's assistance in his efforts to serve a party of men that had just entered.

The Irishman mopped his streaming face as he passed the two friends and said, with an appreciative grin:

"Oi got him inter bed, all right, but fer a whoile, Oi thought he'd be afther puttin' *me* ter bed. He sure did thry his damndest ter do it. Begorra, he had me goin', wonst! He had half o' me clothes off!"

"What a damned scoundrel that feller Atherton is, Bob!" suddenly ejaculated Horton. I'd like—well, I'd like ter attend ter his case perfessionally—somehow or other."

"I'm afraid that you'd not be very popular in Now York, Tom. The promoters and the Wall Street menagerie wouldn't take to you very kindly."

"Probably not. There ain't a whole lot o' difference between some fellers that calls themselves promoters, an' out-an'-out thieves. Holy smoke! Speakin' o' the devil, look who's comin'!"

A large, slightly portly but powerful-looking man of middle-age was entering the bar-room. He was rather flashily dressed, silk-hatted, with a large diamond in his white shirt front and a heavy linked gold watch-chain stretched across his massive chest.

With his iron gray hair, black eyes and ruddy complexion, James Atherton, "mining promoter" and all-round shark, would have passed for a fine-looking man in any company. He even would have been attractive, if his expression had not been so distinctly sinister and repellent.

What his physiognomy had not done for him in unfavorably impressing the minds of his fellow-citizens of Deadwood, had been suggested by his actions during the eight months or so that he had sojourned in the Hills. Several deals that Atherton had pulled off—and a few others that he had unsuccessfully tried to pull off—had appeared a bit raw to certain people and suggested not only that the promoter was living by his wits and at other people's expense, but that those "wits" were not always clean and on the square.

The bad impression that he had made was a little indefinite as yet, but Atherton was far from being

popular, and public opinion slowly but surely was crystallizing toward the point of general protest—which was a serious matter in such a community as Deadwood.

Accompanying Atherton was a slight, fair-haired, boyish-looking fellow of perhaps twenty-two or three years of age, of quick, lithe movement, a sharp, alert expression, and a keen blue eye which, at a glance, took in the room and everybody within sight.

The new-comers stood for a moment surveying the people in the room. Atherton recognized Parker and Horton and his face darkened. As his gaze rested on the former there was a sinister gleam in his eye and a slight sneer curled the corners of his hard mouth. He and his companion proceeded to the bar and Sam came to them to take their orders. As they passed the sheriff and his friend the promoter curtly nodded to them.

"Good evening, Sheriff. Howdy, Parker?"

The two men civilly acknowledged the greeting, and Horton beckoned to McGinnis as if to order a drink.

"Who's the feller with Atherton, Mac?" he asked, quietly.

"His name's Gordon. He's some newspaper feller from th' east. Rolled in lasht noight. He ain't shtoppin' here, but he's a clane-lookin' bye at that, sorr. Hope that divil, Atherton, don't shpoil him."

"Huh!" exclaimed the sheriff; "no danger. They're two of a kind, I'll bet a hat, an' bad eggs is bad eggs—an' pretty safe from bein' spoiled by worse eggs. It won't do any harm t' keep an eye on the new chap too, seein' as how we're on the job with his friend."

"A little whiskey and sugar, Sam," said Atherton. "What's yours, kid?"

"I'll take a cigar. Don't mind if I cut out the booze, do you, Atherton?"

"Of course not—make a ham out of yourself, if you like."

Atherton turned to Parker and Horton:

"Won't you join us, gentlemen?"

"Thankee, no," answered Horton. "We've had half a dozen night caps already, an' when ye get ter them, it's time ter call fer yer time an' quit."

Atherton tossed off his liquor and his friend lit his cigar. At the older man's suggestion the two men repaired to a table near a front window, opening on the veranda, and seated themselves.

Horton and Parker bade McGinnis good night and left the bar-room. As they passed out of the door the sheriff looked sharply at the promoter and his friend, Gordon, and noted that both men were eyeing Parker very attentively. Atherton's expression, he thought, was plainly hostile.

The two friends passed out into the night and started towards home. When they had proceeded a short distance the sheriff suddenly stopped.

"Lookee here, Bob," he said, "you don't need no official escort, so mosey along ter the shack by yerself. I've got a little business ter see to. I'll be along after a while."

"All right, Tom; I've got to turn out at six in the morning and make up for lost time, anyway. If I don't get a hustle on me, I'll never finish that cabin at the mine. See you at wash-up time, old man." and Parker went on his way.

Horton quickly returned to the hotel, secured a chair and noiselessly seated himself on the veranda at

a little distance from the open window near which Atherton and Gordon were sitting, and within plain hearing distance of the two.

As Parker and his friend, the sheriff, passed out, Gordon observed the malevolent glances that Atherton was directing towards the former, and his curiosity was at once aroused.

"Who's your friend, Atherton?"

"Friend!" snapped Atherton, savagely—"The things I'd like to do that damned upstart!—"

"Wouldn't be safe around here, eh?" commented Gordon, dryly.

"You've hit it," snarled the other.

"Possibly you might do some real funny things to him—away from this rough-and-tumble town—if you got the right steer."

"What do you mean?" demanded Atherton.

"Drive slowly, please. I don't like to be rushed for copy. What's his name?"

"Parker—Bob Parker."

"Where does he hail from?"

"Don't know; back east, somewhere or other."

"Seeing that you admit that you don't like him, what's between you?"

"Oh, I hate him on general principles," growled Atherton, evasively. "He puts on more airs than an Indian nabob, and carries himself as if he owned the earth."

"Come off, Atherton, get down to brass tacks and let's have the story."

"Well, he butts into my business in a way that I don't like," replied Atherton. "Somebody has queered several things for me here, and I'm pretty sure that he did it, damn him!"

This acutely interested Horton, who had just

seated himself on the veranda, and he moved his chair a little closer to the window.

"Say, Atherton," sneered Gordon, contemptuously, "that may not be altogether a stall, but it doesn't go far with me. You haven't given me the real story yet. Cough up now, and get it out of your system—it will do you good. Come across; I'm listening."

"Look here, Gordon," blustered Atherton, "if you know so damned much about my business, why do you question me?"

"Just to pad copy," and Gordon laughed sarcastically.

"Now, my gallant blade," the young fellow went on, "your little Gordy will tell you the real story. I'll boil it down so it won't hurt so much."

The sheriff leaned towards the window and listened intently.

"Here goes," said the reporter.

"Mining promoter—lady killer—from New York, comes to Deadwood, seeking whom and what he may devour—meets pretty little school-ma'am—goes after her—handsome young miner in the way—gent from New York furiously jealous—would like to—"

"What do *you* know about the pretty school-ma'am?" demanded Atherton, angrily, half rising from his chair. "How the devil do you know I'm stuck on her?"

"How do I know?" mocked Gordon, "why, man that's dead easy! I saw you talking to Miss Weatherson at the postoffice this noon. I pumped that wind-bag who holds down the postmaster's job and found out about the lady. I'm not blind; she's a raging, tearing beauty—and I know you, Jim Atherton. I merely guessed the rest of the situation,

so far as you are concerned, and hit the nail plumb center."

The promoter sullenly dropped back into his chair. The sheriff, glowering ominously toward the window, removed his broad-brimmed hat and busied himself with wiping away the huge beads of perspiration that stood out upon his sun-tanned forehead.

"I saw the little school-ma'am meet your friend, Parker, down the road a piece this afternoon," continued the reporter. "I was only a little ways behind them when they strolled towards the hotel. I don't have to guess regarding either of them—I *know*. She's dead gone on him, an' he's plumb crazy about her, and, like a sucker, he's trying to keep the lady from finding it out."

Horton grasped the arms of his clumsy chair and nearly twisted them off.

"Well, Mr. Rubber-Neck," sneered Atherton, defiantly, "supposing yours *is* the real story, what about it—and where do you come in?"

"Oh, there's nothing much to say about it, and I don't know as it is my put in, anyhow, but if you'll take my advice, you'll cut it out, my friend."

"Same here, Mr. Promoter," sinisterly muttered Horton.

"Not in a thousand years!"

Atherton brought his fist down on the table so hard that Sam, who was busily wiping off an adjoining table, jumped as if he had been shot, knocking over several glasses and a half-filled bottle of whiskey. McGinnis and his several customers looked curiously toward the two men, but seeing no actual hostilities in operation, resumed their respective occupations of serving and being served liquor.

"I'll get that girl," he blustered, "if I have to—to—"

"Wade through blood to the bridles," suggested his friend, dryly. "Well, I suspect that you can be accommodated. I understand that that fellow—What's his name? Oh,—Horton, the sheriff, who was chinning with Parker a little while ago, is clean gone on the girl."

Horton's impulse was to jump through the window on top of the two men. It was only by an almost superhuman effort that he restrained himself and continued listening to the conversation.

"As she evidently doesn't care a hang about you," Gordon went on irritatingly, "and is merely polite to you because she's a born lady and doesn't know yet that you're not in her class, you have about as much chance with her as a brick of strawberry ice-cream has in hell in the middle of August—hottest year the oldest inhabitant ever knew. As to Parker, he's not safe to monkey with—gambling on form."

"I don't care a damn for the sheriff—and I'm not afraid of Parker, just remember that," exclaimed Atherton, hotly.

"So ye just don't care a damn fer me, an' ye ain't a bit afraid o' Bob, eh?" the sheriff muttered to himself. "I'll remember that, if that newspaper feller don't."

"Bravely said, my bold squire of dames," said Gordon, mockingly, "but let me tell you something, my friend, I'll bet you what you like, that Parker can whip a dozen of you at once in the same ring, without turning a hair, while as for gun-play! Pshaw! Atherton, you make me tired. Go take a post-graduate course. I'm not saying anything at

all about the sheriff. We New Yorkers would better sing pretty low when we bump up against his kind."

"Perhaps I don't need a post-graduate course when it comes to shooting; I can go some myself." boasted Atherton. "I can shoot a turkey's head off at fifty yards—and do it nearly every time."

"Yes," countered Gordon, grimly, "but everything on two legs out here, totes a gun. It's different when the turkey has a gun."

"Right ye are, ye damned little cuss!" chuckled Horton, under his breath. "An' some o' them turkeys has got teeth, an' spurs—an' that's different again."

"All right, gun or no gun," retorted Atherton, doggedly, "I'm going to get that girl just the same."

"If some of her blood-thirsty, hair-triggered adorers don't get you."

"Huh!" thought the sheriff, affectionately fondling the butt of his .44. "Yer not as big a fool as ye look, young feller."

"What about your wife, Atherton?" asked Gordon, suddenly.

Horton gave a start and became more eagerly attentive than ever.

The bolt went home. Atherton sprang to his feet, his face livid with fury.

"To hell with my wife! Hasn't she applied for a divorce?"

"Yes," retorted Gordon, sarcastically, "on grounds of desertion, non-support—and a few other things that New York doesn't mind so much. That will help you a lot with the little school-teacher, won't it? If that doesn't win her, the pathetic story of those three helpless little kiddies that you left be-

hind for that poor sick woman to care for will boom your stock with the lady in great shape—not!"

"The damned scoundrel!" exclaimed Horton, audibly, in spite of himself.

"What's that you said?" demanded Gordon.

"I didn't say," raged Atherton, who was so furious that the sheriff's indiscretion escaped him, "but I'll say it now! You just cut all that family-record stuff out of your conversation when you're talking with me, if you know what's good for you. See?"

Gordon looked Atherton's burly frame over as coolly as if the promoter had been a prize steer, and calmly lighted a fresh cigar.

"Say, Atherton, you'll scare somebody if you're not careful, but let me give you a tip—it won't be a New York police reporter who, for two or three years, has spent most of his nights rubbering about the Five Points and Hell's Half Acre. Don't forget that, please. I'll cut that stuff out, though, but Lord! man, how I hate to do it! My newspaper instinct rebels against the sacrifice. The Herald would fire its brilliant special correspondent if the old man knew I'd killed such bully good stuff as that, even in a talk-fest. Then, perhaps, I couldn't make an honest living any more—and even might have to become a promoter. Who knows?"

Atherton sullenly resumed his seat and the sheriff left his chair and took a position nearer the window, where he could get a full view of the men whose conversation he had found so entertaining—and disturbing.

"Say, Gordon!" exclaimed Atherton, struck by a sudden thought. "How the deuce do you happen

to be so interested in that fellow, Parker? You struck town only last night."

"Oh, I'm a newspaper man, and we've got Scotland Yard, the Pinkerton's and the United States Secret Service beat to a fare-you-well. Besides—well, Parker came from the east, and—"

Atherton rose and laid his hand on Gordon's shoulder.

"By God, Dick!—you've got something on him! You owe me one, boy! Have you forgotten that I—"

"That you saved me from the gutter, eh?" interrupted Gordon, bitterly. "No, I haven't forgotten it—so generous of you to mention it, Atherton. I remember it so well that I'm going to help you out, even though I've got to be an infernal scoundrel to do it. Then we'll be quits, and maybe before you get through, you'll give me, by way of the coroner's office here in Deadwood, a still better story than the one I'm going to suppress."

"What do you know about that fellow?" demanded Atherton, excitedly, leaning over the table toward his companion. "What have you got on him?"

Gordon was thoroughly enjoying the situation. He produced a match, lighted his cigar afresh and puffed at it very deliberately.

"Damn it, man, cut loose!" irritably commanded Atherton, who was consumed with impatience.

"Sh—h! Keep—your—shirt on, Atherton," said Gordon, with exasperating procrastination, between puffs at his cigar.

"Hell! man go ahead." The promoter sank back in his chair.

"Well," drawled the other, "that fellow's name isn't Parker, any more than mine is."

Atherton grasped the end of the table and eagerly

bent forward to catch every word. Horton listened in breathless expectation.

"Calm yourself, and I'll give you the diagram. His name is Parkyn—Robert Parkyn."

"Parkyn!" exclaimed the promoter, "that name sounds mighty familiar to me."

"Shouldn't wonder if it did, as you're a New Yorker and read the papers. Do you remember the young engineer who got mixed up with a lot of Dagoes at A . . . on the Hudson, during the railroad strike last year and killed one of them?"

Atherton sprang to his feet in wild excitement and rushing around the table caught the reporter by the arm.

"What! Do you mean to say that Parker is the murderer?"

"There's no doubt of it. I'd know him among a thousand. I reported the trial, and wouldn't be likely to forget him. He was sent up to Sing Sing for twenty years, but a couple of months ago he escaped, breaking the head of that despicable brute, Bull Hennessy, on the way. He was winged by the guards, but got to the river, jumped in and was again fired at by the guards and everybody supposed that he was either shot through the head and killed, or so badly hurt that he was drowned. He has not been heard from since that day. A reward was offered for his recapture and it still stands, but as he is believed to be dead, the case practically has dropped out of sight."

"You're sure you are not making a mistake?" asked Atherton, hungrily.

"Mistake! Why, man, I knew him the minute I set my eyes on him. Just to prove that I know what

I'm talking about, let me show you something I have in my trunk."

The reporter left the bar-room and passed out of the hotel without noticing Horton, who was sitting in the deep shadows of the veranda, returning in a few minutes with a large book under his arm.

"Here," he said, opening the volume, "is a collection of clippings of my stuff. This is my account of the trial—and a mighty good picture of your beloved friend, Parker!"

With his finger on the page indicated, Gordon pushed the book across the table to his companion.

In a transport of delight Atherton glanced at the headlines.

"By all the gods! It *is* that fellow, sure as shooting. So, Mr. Bob Parker," he sneered, joyfully gazing at the picture, "you're just an ordinary damned jail-bird, eh?"

"Sh—h! Not so loud, man," cautioned his friend.

The newspaper man looked about him apprehensively, and with decided relief saw that everybody had left the bar-room excepting McGinnis and the colored porter, who were busily engaged tidying up the bottles and glassware.

"This hair-triggered town is not a safe place for calling names," continued Gordon, warningly, "No use in ordering your tuberoses and immortelles prematurely."

"Glad ter keep the wreaths nice an' fresh fer ye, gents," said Horton meaningly, to himself.

"Oh, but it's dead easy!" exulted Atherton. "Just watch me put that fellow back in his cage—that's all!"

"Better not make any fuss about it," warned Gordon. "Such things are best pulled off on the

quiet, you know. A letter from me to the chief of police in New York will do the business. The chief will keep our end of the matter quiet, and it never need be known that we had a finger in the pie."

"Fine business!" muttered Horton, savagely biting his mustache. "Nobody'll ever know, eh? Nobody but that old cuss, Tom Horton—an' p'raps he don't count."

"Yes," protested Atherton, vindictively, "but I want that big stiff to know that I'm onto him, and when he is back in the pen, that I *did* have a hand in caging him again."

Gordon looked his amazement and disgust as he replied:

"Say, Atherton, are you crazy, or just a plain, everyday, damned fool? If you want to commit suicide, I suppose it's your business, and that nobody has a right to stop you, but why don't you take morphine? It's a blamed sight easier, more comfortable and not so mussy as the way you're headed. Why, man, I wouldn't dare to send the story on to my paper—not while I still have business in the Hills—much less shoot my mouth off here in Deadwood!"

"All right, then, I'll chance it myself," snapped Atherton viciously. "I know the situation much better than you do. Horton and Parker are rivals, in both love and politics. Parker has been here only a short time, but he's made a hit, and already is talked of as a probable candidate for the office of Sheriff, to succeed Tom Horton. Horton naturally is going to try to succeed himself. Now, human nature is human nature. Horton will be damned glad to get rid of Parker—and on two counts. I'll tip the situation off to the sheriff, and you'll see Bob Parker get his, all right."

"But the two seem to be mighty good friends, Atherton," objected Gordon.

"Friends? Bunk! my boy, bunk!" sneered Atherton, contemptuously. "Friendship doesn't count in love, war or politics. It's a little woolly white lamb on the altar of ambition. When selfish personal interests come into the door, friendship hides itself in the coal cellar and gets a black smooch on its lovely nose. When jealousy and personal ambition both enter the temple, friendship flies up the chimney and disappears in smoke. Friendship? Humph! The real thing is so rare that history has immortalized the little bunch of suckers that indulged in it. David and Jonathan, Damon and Pythias and—well, you could count 'em on three or four fingers. Friendship? Bah! Just you watch that fellow Horton fall for the story."

Horton could contain himself no longer. He stepped into full view in the window and leaning over the sill half-way into the room, glared furiously at the two plotters, who rose and stood looking at him in open-mouthed astonishment and consternation.

He continued indignantly to transfix with his eye the objects of his wrath for a full half-minute without speaking.

"Is—that—so?" he sneered. "Just watch him fall, gents. It'll make ye laugh—jest like the cat that licked the mustard plaster. You're a precious pair o' beauties, ain't ye? A decent feller gets in yer way, Atherton, an' instead o' fightin' it out with him like a man, you try ter get him by playin' him dirt. That's without sayin' nothin' about the cheek of a damned hound like you, in even lookin' at a decent woman. Look here, you fellers, d'ye

really think I'd fall fer any o' your dirty work? Come now, honest Injun, do ye?"

Atherton was first to recover his assurance, and impudently returned the sheriff's gaze.

"Dirty work, eh? he bluffed; "well, my friend, we'll let it go at that, but since you've listened to our private conversation and understand the situation, I demand that you do your duty."

"Duty, eh?" retorted Horton, significantly: "I'll do my duty all right—I always do. That's why I keep my ears open when miserable rats like you engage in conspiracies. Let me tell you somethin', Mr. Jim Atherton: People in this town hain't got much patience with fellers who digs up the eastern records of our citizens, an' the kind o' record you're a-goin' t' fasten on Bob Parker—if I let ye, which I'll be damned if I do—is a passport ter good society in the Black Hills. We're short on wicked pasts —an' long on hard hittin' an' quick shootin'. D'ye git that?"

"That's all well enough," argued Atherton, "but you—"

"To hell with yer 'buts'!" blazed Horton. "I'm pretty near out o' wind—I was out o' patience with you two varmints when I begun talkin'—so I'm goin' ter cut this short. If you fellers wanter enjoy health, prosperity an' long life in this neck o' the woods, don't ye open yer yap, either one o' ye, about Bob Parker. D'ye hear?"

"But you are sworn to uphold the law, sir," expostulated Atherton.

"There ye go, buttin' again! Ye'll keep on with yer fool 'buts' till ye hurt that ugly head o' yourn, Mister," sneered Horton. "O' course, I'm sworn to uphold the law, but I ain't sworn to uphold no

low-lived sneaks like you fellers. Besides, *I'm* the law in this partic'lar case—an' I'm Bob Parker's friend, an' don't you forgit it. If ye double-cross him, I'll give ye another one o' them history cases ter count on yer dirty fingers."

"What!" Atherton indignantly exclaimed. "You would dare to—"

"Dare?" Horton broke in, "Dare? Hell no! There wouldn't be any darin' to it. There's more'n one way o' gittin' yer man an' clearin' the law—an' I'm not the only one that knows the game. There's a dozen men right here in Deadwood, that's pretty damned good at it—an' they're all good friends o' Bob's, don't forget that. Any one of 'em would be tickled ter death ter pick a row with you. Ye know the rest. Ye ain't none too pop'lar with the people o' this town, anyhow, an' you'd be easy meat."

"Mebbe you're just a case of a nice young man that's fell inter bad comp'ny," he continued, turning to Gordon and critically inspecting him; "but jest so as not ter show any partiality, you're in on my remarks, Mr. Pencil-Pusher. What I said jest now goes double. Savvy?"

Gordon apparently was too much embarrassed to speak. He stood gazing dumbly at the sheriff.

"Got the buck fever, eh?" sneered Horton, witheringly. "That's good—it may keep ye from makin' any fool breaks like yer side partner here's been doin. By the way, young feller, I wonder if that stuff ye said about Bob Parker ain't a pack o' damned lies, anyhow. Let me see that book."

"The book is my property, sir," expostulated the suddenly aroused Gordon.

"Give—me—that—book!" thundered the sheriff, extending his hand.

Completely cowed, the reporter went to the window and surrendered the volume of clippings. Horton quickly glanced through it, critically reviewing the page that Gordon had exhibited to Atherton.

"Well, what d'ye think o' that?" he ejaculated, satirically. "That picture don't look no more like Bob Parker than it does like me! Good joke on Bob —ha, ha! How I will josh him about that caricatoor. The feller that drew that ought ter be arrested fer assault an' battery, an' mayhem. Why, it spoils yer pretty book, sonny."

He calmly tore out the offending leaf.

"Here! what are you doing?" exclaimed the now thoroughly exasperated Gordon.

"Oh," chuckled Horton, "I'm editin' copy—an' censorin' the press, that's all. Stuff like this is immoral—an' very dangerous."

He crumpled up the leaf, stuffed it in his pocket and proffered the book to its owner.

"Here, young feller, ye can have yer book now. It's the only genuine expurgated edition of the Noo York Herald."

The reporter angrily snatched the book from the sheriff's hand and without a word sullenly returned to his seat at the table.

"Such bad bringin' up!" commented Horton, derisively. "Now you two rats can hunt yer holes. Ta, ta, gents!"

He left the veranda and started towards home, when an afterthought struck him and he returned to the window.

"I jest come back ter remark, that if I ever hear o' either o' you fellers speakin' that little school-

ma'am's name agin, loud enough fer anybody ter hear it, I'll cut off a real nice-lookin' pair o' ears an' put 'em in my pocket. D'ye catch on?"

His duty done and his conscience thus relieved, the honest fellow went towards home, suggestively whistling the then popular air, "See that my grave's kept green."

"It'll be my play next, Mr. Tom Horton!" hissed the infuriated Atherton, rising to his feet and gazing threateningly after the sheriff.

"Pleasant party, that," commented the reporter.

Atherton did not answer and Gordon laughed vociferously, striking the table a sharp rap with his knuckles.

"He did hand it to us for fair, didn't he? Say, Atherton, on the level, we got just what was coming to us, didn't we? That fellow is right, and you know it. We *are* a couple of rats—and you're in the king row. Come, let's have a drink; I'm all in, and you look like hell sued for murder and likely to lose the case."

Atherton obviously was furious at Gordon's sudden change of front, but followed him to the bar.

"So, Horton is right, is he, you damned turncoat?" sneered the promoter to himself, *en route*. "He's right in just one thing—there *is* more than one way of getting your man and clearing the law. When a man picks a quarrel with an escaped murderer who has a price on his head and kills him, there's no come-back. Thanks for the hunch, Tom Horton."

As he set out the drinks, McGinnis, who had heard the sheriff's parting shot, glanced at his huge watch, and loudly remarked:

"Begorra! Oi thought it musht be pretty near

toime t' knock off, whin Oi saw Misther Horton lave the windy. He knows more about shuttin' up toime than inny wan in this town. When he says 'shut up', there's no use argyfyin' wid him. An' if he says ter *kape* shut up, ye'd betther listen."

McGinnis looked meaningly at his two guests who, knowing that there were no closing laws in Deadwood, readily grasped the significance of the astute Irishman's remarks.

Chapter XXVII

AT THE LITTLE RED SCHOOL HOUSE

The Constitution follows the American flag—sometimes. The little red school-house follows it always.

In these degenerate days, cold-hearted, unsentimental vandals have advocated painting the little school-house in more subdued colors. They even have accomplished their diabolic purpose here and there over this fair land of ours, but they never can quite conceal the historic fact that the corner-stone of our national progress has been painted red, so far back in the dim and misty past that the memory of man dare not tackle the problem of when and where it was anything *but* red.

Great men and famous women, mighty thoughts, daring deeds, human comedies and tragedies, fascinating romances, social upheavals, national dramas—things of human interest by the hundred, have been cradled in the little red school-house. Especially has it been the cradle of sweet romance.

Who that ever attended the country school, has forgotten that first boyhood's sweetheart in pinafores with yellow hair in braids whose books he carried o' mornings? And there are tender memories of another kind: Who does not remember the sting of hickory, on rear or flank, and the dull aches and smarting palms inflicted by the merciless ferule?

The school-house at Deadwood was an especially diminutive and more than usually glaring specimen of the genus. It was a crude one-story structure with an abundance of small, square-paned, old-fashioned windows, destitute of blinds, that peered at one like so many curious, inquiring eyes.

The building stood at a fork of the main road, the lesser "tine" of which wound most picturesquely to the rear of the school-house, and disappeared among the stern and rugged hills that flanked the highway and formed the background of the school site. These hills were sparsely covered with verdure —mainly scrub-oaks and scraggly pines.

At one corner and in front of the school-house was a majestic, time-worn, weather-beaten oak, at the foot of which lay a huge lichen-covered boulder, framed by a few shrubs of various kinds.

At the base of the boulder, emerging from beneath it, a spring of crystal clearness sparkled and bubbled, the overflow tinkling musically as it ran athwart the road beneath a little rustic bridge and tumbled on its frolicsome way over the rocks and down the hill on the opposite side of the highway. Secured to the tree by a long chain, was a large rusty tin cup, the use of which always is dangerous in all communities—and positively criminal in some.

In front of the building, which stood a little removed from the road, was what once was a plot of grass. This had been worn bare by erosion with many childish feet.

Surrounding the school-house was a sparse grove of small trees, immediately behind and above which towered a frowning mass of rock of variegated colors, that looked as if it would require but little

force to dislodge it and send it crashing upon the tiny devoted structure beneath.

Time was when a description of the fauna of the little grove surrounding the Deadwood school-house would have been like the Irishman's immortal description of the snakes in Ireland—there was none. School boys and fauna do not mix—at least to the advantage of the fauna—and prior to Miss Weatherson's advent, every furred and feathered creature of the country round about gave the school-house, and even its remote environments, a wide berth.

The new school mistress had a fondness for wild creatures, and as she soon gained the respect and affection of her pupils, she finally—albeit with some difficulty, it must be admitted—succeeded in curbing the natural propensity of the boys of the school to destroy everything living that was not human, which came within stone or club-shot.

Soon after the boys had been pledged to innocuous observation, vain longings and itching fingers, as they viewed the birds and squirrels that had been so long exiled from the vicinity, the little creatures returned, and by their sweet songs and playful antics added much to the attractiveness of the school surroundings.

School was over for the day and the romping, happy younger children had wended their frolicsome way homeward, leaving the older ones to follow more sedately and leisurely.

Ellen McGinnis remained after the other scholars had departed, waiting for the teacher to finish her duties, so that the two might go home together.

As the last of her schoolfellows disappeared down the road, the young girl appeared at the door of

the school-house, bonneted and swinging a bundle of books by the strap. She stood for a moment on the threshold, where she soon was joined by the teacher.

"It is very good of you to wait for me every day as you do, Ellen, dear," said Miss Weatherson, affectionately putting her arm around her favorite pupil's waist.

"Oh, I don't mind, Miss Weatherson. I love to be with you after all the others have gone. It seems then, somehow, as if we were—you know—"

"Chums, dear?" smiled the teacher, understandingly.

"Yes 'm. You see, I never had any girl chums, and there was only mother to talk to when I wanted to talk to women folks."

The two slowly walked to the boulder in front of the school-house, and Ellen, removing her sunbonnet and throwing it upon the ground nearby, seated herself upon the mossy rock.

"It's awfully nice to wait out here for you," she said happily, swinging her legs by way of emphasis. It's not a bit lonesome. Why, the other day when I was waiting for you, a big, brown fox-squirrel with a great bushy tail came out on a branch of that big tree over yonder, and talked to me the longest time! And there's a tiny little chipmunk, and a red-headed woodpecker, and a big yellow-hammer living up there somewhere, and it's such fun to sit out here and hear them calling each other names—just like bad children."

"I'm afraid, dear," the teacher gently remarked, "that you'll miss the squirrels and the birds, and those sombre old hills, when you have gone east to that wonderful school."

"Somehow, teacher," rejoined the girl, soberly,

"the idea of being rich doesn't seem so grand as it did at first. The night Mr. Parker told us about the mine, I was so happy I couldn't sleep, but the next morning, and all day long, ever since—well, it gives me the queerest feeling right here, in the pit of my stomach, every time I think about going away from Deadwood and you, and the school and —and—"

"And some other things that interest young girls. For instance—" and Miss Weatherson glanced amusedly down the road.

Ellen followed the teacher's gaze and saw Smithers, who was just stepping into view from behind the trees at a turn of the road a short distance away. He saw the ladies, hesitated, and finally stopped, partially concealed by a tree, to adjust his monocle.

"I was just thinking of that very person," pouted the girl, spiritedly, "but I'm very angry with him. Why, I haven't even spoken to him for two whole weeks!"

Miss Weatherson laughed teasingly as she replied:

"Well, dear, if that is the case, I'll go back to my work and give you a chance to discipline him. Being a male person, he probably deserves it, on general principles."

She smilingly re-entered the school-house and closed the door behind her, just as Smithers, having painstakingly arranged his eye-glass, stepped into full view and with a doubtful air, as if he were not quite sure of a cordial reception, approached the young girl.

Ellen ostentatiously took a book from her bundle and pretended to be reading it, rather inconsistently holding it upside down.

"Ah! There you are, Miss Ellen!" he ventured, cautiously.

She tossed her head and turned her face away from him.

"Oh, I say now, really, I—"

The Irish lassie merely shrugged her shoulders, readjusted herself on the boulder and continued with her obvious pretense of reading.

"By Jove!" ejaculated the Englishman, "I begin to think I'm intrudin' a bit, don'tcher know—I really do."

"What *was* that funny noise, I wonder?" said Ellen, looking about her as if searching for something.

Smithers carefully adjusted his monocle:

"My word! But that's a bally joke. It really is, you know."

"My goodness!" she exclaimed, as if noticing him for the first time, "it's you, is it?"

"You surely haven't forgotten me voice, have you? Really, now."

"No," she retorted spunkily, "but I've been trying to—ever since that evening two weeks ago when you were intoxicated. You've a lot of cheek to speak to me again, sir. I don't want anything more to do with you, so there now!"

"But I say, now really," he said penitently, "you musn't be too hard on a poor chap. It wasn't quite all my fault, you know. I never was bowled over before in all me life. It was the bloomin' rye, you know. I called for Bass, an' the blawsted bar-keeper handed me out nothin' but spirits, don'tcher know, an' I had to keep me end up."

"Nobody else was intoxicated," she scornfully

asserted; "I have my opinion of a tenderfoot that will let a lot of rough-neck miners get him drunk!"

"Yes, but those bloomin' fellahs have copper linin's, an' I'm not acclimated, you know. When I get on me sea legs, I'll—"

"You will, will you?" flashed Ellen, indignantly; "well, until you do get your sea legs, and some sense along with them, you'll either keep out of the way of those fellows or out of mine."

"But, I say," he pleaded humbly; "if I promise not to get bowled over again, will you forgive me—what?"

"Sure I will!" laughed the girl. Come here, you silly," and the little witch made room for him on the boulder.

Smithers readjusted his monocle and with great dignity seated himself beside her.

"Thanks, awfully, Miss Ellen."

"Well, anyhow," she said cheerily, kicking her small feet and plump legs against the boulder, "the boys can't call you a tenderfoot any more."

"I should think not, really," he answered, proudly. "I've been jolly well baptized a citizen of Deadwood —My word ! I really have, don'tcher know."

"All right, sir," she laughed, "but once is enough. Too many baptisms are bad for one."

"An' do you really care what happens to me, Miss Ellen?" he asked, snuggling up to the young girl and trying to take her hand, in awkwardly sentimental fashion.

With a fine display of offended dignity, she abruptly withdrew her hand and moved to the farther side of the boulder.

"There you go again! Haven't I told you a dozen times that I'm too young to be made love to?"

Smithers curiously gazed at her through his monocle.

"My word! Have you now, really? But would you mind growin' up a bit?"

"See here, Mr. Smithers," she chaffed, mischievously, "I'm going away to school in the east. While I'm gone—and growing up—you can talk it over with father and," she giggled, "with mother."

"Oh, I say now, really! That's a bit stiff, you know. Cawn't I come to some understandin' with your father? I never could talk to married women. They don't seem to take to me at all kindly, don'tcher know."

She pointed a scornful finger at him.

"Fraidy cat! Fraidy cat!

"But I'm not afraid, only—"

"Only you are—'rawther'," she mocked.

"Well, suppose I do win your mother over—how about you?"

"If you can win mother over," she laughed merrily, "why—well, you can make love to me all you want to when I come back—and I'll take care of Dad."

"It's a bargain, Miss Ellen! an' I'm goin' to win. Any man that's been baptized a citizen o' Deadwood, can bally well face anything—what?"

"Perhaps," she gravely replied, "but before you face Ma, you'd better shed your boiled shirt and get to work looking for a strike. And you might lose that piece of window glass from your eye, and fix up your accent a little. They don't make a hit with Ma—she's Irish, you know."

"Is she, really? How extraor'nary! But, I say, I've been thinkin' it over a bit already, an' I think

that perhaps you're right. Here goes me bloomin' monocle!"

He removed the glass from his eye, unfastened the narrow ribbon that secured it to the lapel of his coat, and was about to dash the bit of glass against the boulder, when Ellen stayed his hand and appropriated it.

"That's my property, if you please. I want to keep it to remind you of how you used to look before you became civilized," and she suspended the monocle about her own neck.

"There," she gibed, archly, "little white squaw got heap scalp. And now that you begin to look human, what else are you going to do to make good? How about the 'strike'?"

"I was about to tell you, Miss Ellen, that I've been talkin' a bit with Mr. Parker, an' by Jove! we're goin' to—"

"Oh!" exclaimed the girl, standing down from the boulder. "Here he is now! Howdy, Mr. Parker?"

"Hello there, little girl! Hello, Smithers! and what are you up to now—playing Mary's little lamb?"

"I don't quite understand you, Mr. Parker," and the Englishman bewilderedly felt for his absent monocle.

"Why," laughed Parker, winking at Ellen, who was trying to preserve her gravity, "the lamb used to stick around till Mary came out of school."

"Did he, really? That was rawther clever of him. But I never was keen on mutton, don'tcher know."

"Glad to hear you're not a cannibal, Smithers," remarked Parker, waggishly. "Has Miss Weatherson gone home, Ellen?"

"No, sir—I'm waiting for her."

"Ellen, my child," he said, with mock gravity, "I'm astonished and grieved at the way you mix your tenses! I really must speak to your teacher about it. What you meant to say was, that you *were* waiting for her. Am I correct?"

"No, sir," she giggled. "I *was* waiting for her. Come, Mr. Smithers; you may take me for a walk."

She grasped the the Englishman by the hand and proceeded to drag him away down the road towards town.

"But, I say," sputtered Smithers, "I want to speak to Mr. Parker about—"

"That will keep, Smithers," said Parker. "Quit your bleating and trot along with Mary. I'll see you about the claim tomorrow."

"Thanks, awfully, old chap!"

As she led away her captive, Ellen turned and laughed. "Good luck, Mr. Parker," she called, throwing him a kiss.

"You angel!" he cried, returning the aerial salutation.

"Luck!" he exclaimed, bitterly. "Luck! I feel as if I was going to my own funeral—as I am, very nearly. Luck! Humph! I wouldn't know it if I met it in the street, tagged and ready for delivery. I'm like the fellow who had nothing but a two-tined fork when it was raining soup."

He hesitated a moment, then approaching the school-house, rapped on the door and stood expectant.

The school-teacher appeared at the door and cordially welcomed him.

"You see, Miss Weatherson," he said, merrily, "I'm getting the school habit."

"You're not a very dutiful scholar at that, sir,"

she chided, raising a playfully admonishing finger. "You haven't called for me for ages. Don't you know that your friend, Mr. Horton, hasn't nearly so many black marks as I have put down opposite your name? He has been at school several times since your last attendance."

"I will admit that Tom is a much more faithful cavalier than I, Miss Weatherson," he gravely replied.

"You ought to be ashamed to let him surpass you in gallantry, sir," she said, jocosely.

"I suppose I must expect a note to my parents if I don't do better," he laughed.

"The hickory, sir."

"So bad as that? Come, I must get away from here! Are you ready to go home?"

"Not quite, I have some examination papers to correct before I go."

"Bother the papers! Why not attend to them after dinner?"

"Ah! but I start a preparatory school this evening," she rejoined, with a smile. "I am going to help Ellen to get ready for that wonderful school in the east."

"Then she really is going?"

"She surely is."

"Well, the McGinnises certainly can 'go some' when they get started."

"You mean Mrs. McGinnis can 'go some'," she laughed.

"I accept the amendment," he smilingly returned, bowing low. "She is a woman of action, all right —and, by the way, it didn't take her long to close the deal when I got rid of Atherton and produced a real buyer for the mine. Possibly she might have

done better had she waited, but she is something of a sure-thing player, herself, once she gets going.

"But seriously, Miss Weatherson," he continued, looking at the sky, "why not put your work aside; at least for a little while? It is early yet and you are not so very far from home. Suppose we sit on that picturesque boulder and chat—and enjoy a little of the wonderful sunset that is almost due."

"Alas!—those unfortunate examination papers!" she sighed, smilingly.

"It is something to have cut out even those papers for a short time," he said, following her to a seat on the boulder.

They had chatted about things commonplace for some time when he asked, abruptly:

"Miss Weatherson, what could have impelled a woman like you to come to this rough pioneer town?"

"Briefly—necessity," she quietly rejoined. "I am an only child. My mother died when I was but ten years of age. My father was a wealthy man. He retired from business some years ago, but he still was ambitious. His mind still was active and his spirit grew restless. He was drawn into speculation, lost everything he had and died—broken-hearted. I had to do something. I was getting on in a literary way and could have made a success of it in time, but—well, necessity will not wait on commercial literary appreciation, and besides, Ithaca was not a pleasant place in which to live, after our money took wings. Our friends—"

"Lost their eyesight, eh?" he interjected, cynically.

"Well," she laughed, "possibly their eyesight was all right, but father and I had shrunk so that they couldn't see us."

"But why did you select the Black Hills, of all places, for your struggle with the world?"

"Because I wanted to try the west. Deadwood *is* the west, and typifies the first heart-beats of a nation. I have grown to love the western country, because its people are—well, just human, that's all. The west is America. It is the butterfly. The east is the discarded cocoon."

"And you really like the west—its plain people and its rough ways?"

"Yes," she replied, earnestly, "I adore them. Here men are gauged by what they are—not by what they have. The people I meet are not worrying about their family trees. The lives of the westerners begin—where they begin. Here men are men—and women are women. The poor creatures called 'ladies', by way of classification, are kept away from respectable women. Even the professional gamblers are labelled—they wear frock coats and silk hats, so that all men may know them for what they are. There are no whited sepulchers in the fine free air of the western frontier. Rowdies and criminals can take their choice, be men or—"

"Or corpses, eh?" finished Parker, sententiously. You're right—our social lines are pretty closely drawn. But I often have thought how trying your position must be. The Miners' Rest is a rather queer place for a woman reared as you have been."

"No, 'queer' is not the word," she enthused, "just wonderful! I am quite as safe there as I was in my father's house—safer, perhaps, for social distinctions are not always moral distinctions. I've been accosted by well-dressed men in the Fifth Avenue Hotel—even in the streets of Albany during my visits there. Heaven help the man who offers a

woman an insult in Deadwood! There's only a screen between the bar-room and the hotel office at the Miners' Rest. A real partition might be useful in protecting the feelings of the miners that congregate at the bar—they are comically bashful. It is not needed to protect from rudeness the women of the household or their women guests. They have as many brothers to protect them as there happen to be men in the house. I fear that a dress suit never will look good to me again."

"You make out a good case for the men," he remarked, amusedly, "but how about the women?"

"They are worthy mates, sisters, daughters and mothers of western men," she continued, warmly. "Why, there's more sincerity and kindheartedness in Mrs. McGinnis's little finger, peppery as she is, than in the entire bodies of any dozen society women you ever met in—in—"

She looked at him inquiringly.

"In the east, Miss Weatherson," he responded, quietly.

"She noted the evasion and her face assumed a puzzled expression. Her companion relieved the situation by pointing to the sky.

"See!" he said, "the red and crimson fires are beginning to glow in the west! The sun looks like a huge ball of incandescent copper!"

"Isn't it wonderful?" she exclaimed, ecstatically.

"Such sunsets are so wonderful," he answered, pensively, "that I sometimes suspect that the ancient sun-worshipers builded wiser than they knew. Our own aborigines too, perhaps, divined the arcanum when the 'Great Sun Father', came into their religion. Who knows?"

They sat without speaking for a while, gazing at the beautiful color effects in the western heavens. He finally broke the silence.

"Miss Weatherson, at the risk of being considered impertinent, I am going to ask you a question."

"Yes?"

"Do you think you eventually will prove your admiration of western men by marrying one of them?"

She smiled quizzically.

"Your question is purely impersonal, of course—from your side."

He laughed, rather forcedly, she thought.

"In all modesty," he replied, "it must be impersonal. To save my face, after your warm eulogy of western men, I perforce must crawl back into my cocoon and be an easterner again."

"Well," she answered, with an obvious pretense of seriousness, "since you presume to inquire into my matrimonial plans, I'll tell you a great secret; I —don't—know."

"Ah! But you may *have* to know before you get through," he said, gravely. Half the men in town already are crazy about you."

She tossed her head with affected indignation.

"I like your impudence, sir! Pray, what is the matter with the other half?"

"Pshaw!" he laughed, "they're all too old, too young, or—already married."

"That's better," she said, lightly—"You wriggled out of that so cleverly that I am going to forgive you for discounting my attractions."

"Thank you. And now," he went on, soberly; "I'm going to confess that I was only half jesting when I said that you shortly would have to decide

whether or not you were going to marry a western man. Miss Weatherson, you soon will have to come to a decision, regarding one man at least."

She looked at him in wonderment.

"A decision!" she exclaimed; "one man!—Why, I don't quite get your meaning."

He stood down from the boulder and gazed at her intently for a brief space.

"Don't misunderstand me, Miss Weatherson," he said, earnestly, "and please don't think me impertinent. A certain man is deeply, sincerely in love with you. He is a king among men, and as brave as a lion in most things, but he's bashful as a girl. He is my best friend, and—well," he went on desperately, "I don't like to see him eating his own heart out. I want to help him to win—or help him to be cured. There is no middle ground for a man like him."

"What?" she demanded, in amazement, "do you mean to say that—that one of your friends is in love with me—doesn't know where he stands and hasn't the courage to find out?"

"That is precisely what I mean."

"Why, how absurd!"

"Absurd perhaps, but true, nevertheless—and not wholly without precedent," he returned, dryly. "You do not yet quite understand the western man after all, Miss Weatherson. There's another quality that you did not mention in your eulogy—he rarely is conceited enough to think that to love a woman is to win her. He sometimes is like Moses on Mount Pisgah."

"And who is this modest paragon?" she queried, smilingly.

"Tom Horton—but he's all man, and no paragon."

"What! Tom Horton—the sheriff?" she gasped.

"Yes, Tom Horton—one of the best fellows that ever lived."

"W—why, you astonish me! I never thought—"

"Probably not," he replied, quietly, "Tom is not the man to wear his heart on his sleeve, or to make false moves, but *he's* been doing a lot of thinking just the same."

"But I'm not the least interested in Mr. Horton, save as a friend, and have given him absolutely no encouragement in any way. I never for a moment suspected that he was becoming interested in that fashion. I admire him greatly and have enjoyed his society very much, but as for anything more—"

"Why not?" he argued, persuasively, "Tom's a fine fellow—he's popular—everybody likes him—he's prosperous and absolutely on the square. He's the very flower of western manhood. He loves you dearly—he's not the man to do anything by halves. As for good looks, well, if I were a woman, I'd think twice before I turned him down. Why, I really took it for granted that you loved him. The Lord only knows how he would take it if he knew that I was butting in! But, if *you'll* forgive me, I'll take a chance on dear old Tom."

She smiled enigmatically and laid her hand on his arm.

"I do forgive you."

"Then you really understand?" he asked, feelingly.

There was a warm light in her eyes that told a world-old story as she answered slowly.

"Yes, I think I understand. You plead eloquently, and I believe that all you say of your friend is true, but, you see, I do not love him."

"Merely because you never have thought of him in that way," he urged, half-heartedly, knowing the while the absurdity of his argument. "That is an impediment which can readily be cured—now that you *will* think about him. Time and propinquity accomplish wonders."

The young woman laughed heartily at his transparent disingenuousness.

"What indifference hath kept apart," she paraphrased, "let no man put together. Take my advice, Mr. Parker; never open a matrimonial bureau. The sort of thing you are advocating doesn't work, or, rather, it is a double-edged sword that cuts both ways—as the records of the divorce courts prove."

"But, if there's nobody else and you'll sit in the game," he earnestly insisted, "it will work all right in this case."

"And what if there *is* somebody else?"

"Then I'm ready to climb the tallest tree that you may select, and no questions asked. It's a hopeless case."

"It surely is—for Mr. Horton," she asserted, with unmistakable positiveness.

"I'm mighty sorry there's somebody else," he remarked, gloomily.

She looked at him quizzically for a space.

"And why should you be sorry?" she inquired, gently.

"Because," he faltered, "because—"

"A woman's reason," the young woman mischievously interrupted.

"No, by heaven!" he contradicted. "A man's reason. I am sorry because—I beg your pardon, Miss Weatherson, I—"

"Granted," she said, archly, "go on—John Alden."

He looked at her in astonishment which they both knew was more than half hypocritical. She answered the question that was coming, before he really had formulated it.

"A woman always knows," she murmured, softly, "if she cares to know. This is different—you are not Mr. Horton."

He resumed his seat beside her.

"And you really cared to know?" he asked.

"Yes, I cared."

There was silence for a brief moment, she waiting expectantly, and he looked toward the kaleidoscopic sky and seriously communing with himself. He suddenly sprang to his feet, his face set in lines of stern resolution.

"I must not—I *will* not go on! I have said too much already!"

She gazed at him tenderly, and his softening was as sudden as was his previous determination to resist the inevitable. He took both her hands in his own.

"I have no right to go on—Priscilla," he said, moodily.

"And why have you not the right?" she rejoined, earnestly. "Can you not eliminate your friend, Horton, from the situation? Even loyalty and friendship can be carried too far—to the point of fanaticism."

"Oh, it is not that!" he protested, emphatically. "So long as I thought Tom was the bright particular star, I would have been a fool, as well as a disloyal friend, if I had spoken. With my friend out of the running I would have much to say to you, only—"

"Only what?" she whispered, tensely waiting.

He abruptly released her hands and moved away from her.

"I am not worthy to even speak to a woman like you!" he cried, fiercely.

She sprang lightly to the ground and stood beside him.

"Not worthy!" she exclaimed, in wide-eyed astonishment. "Not worthy! Why are you not worthy?"

"There's no use postponing the inevitable, Miss Weatherson," he answered, resolutely. "You will have to know sooner or later—and I may as well tell you now—it is only fair. I want you to know just who and what I am, and how impossible it is that even our friendship can continue. I want you to know this more especially, because I, knowing that you know, never will dare to think of you again. I'll tell you everything, and prove to you that my life is but a mass of wreckage—prove to you that I have no right to associate with a noble woman like yourself, much less drag her into the life of a miserable outcast."

She listened in helpless amazement, and when he had done was speechless for a moment.

"You!" she exclaimed, recovering herself. "You, an outcast!"

He bowed his head and replied, despondently, "Yes, an outcast—with a brand upon him."

He raised his head, with quick decision, and, taking a step nearer, faced her squarely.

"You visited Sing Sing penitentiary a few months ago, in company with your father. You were shown about the prison by a trusty."

"Yes, the poor fellow!" she exclaimed, excitedly.

"He escaped while escorting us around the prison, was wounded by the guards, sprang into the river and was drowned. Oh! it was an awful experience!" She shuddered at the unpleasant recollection.

"Look at me closely, Miss Weatherson," he said, tensely, "did you ever see me before you came to Deadwood?"

"Why, no," she replied in wonderment.

"Look again," he said, with grim persistence. "Imagine me with my hair cut short, my face shaved, and wearing a rusty brown suit of clothes. Think—think hard!"

"I don't in the least understand you," said the young woman, in complete bewilderment. "But how did you know about that visit to the prison?" she suddenly ejaculated, in profound astonishment.

"Liberty, hair and respectable raiment make a wonderful change in a man, Miss Weatherson."

"What! You?—you were that—that—"

"I was that convict—that jail bird—Trusty No. 515, Miss Weatherson."

"And you were not drowned!" she exclaimed with great emotion.

"Obviously not, more's the pity," he returned, cynically. "I saved my number,—which doesn't count for much when a fellow is branded as an escaped murderer and has a price on his head."

"But you were innocent," she said, confidently.

"Yes—I was jobbed. I interfered in a fight between some drunken Italian laborers on a piece of railroad construction work, of which I was superintendent. In the fracas a man was killed—the killing was sworn onto me—and I went up the river. The story is short, but not sweet."

"You say you were 'jobbed'—What do you mean?"

"I mean," he replied, gloomily, "that a plot was laid to get me out of the way. The quarrel among the laborers furnished the opportunity. The Italians were crazy drunk when the unfortunate affair happened. One of the conspirators incited the brawl, or at least plied the men with liquor and was himself in the mix-up. He accused me of firing the fatal shot. The brawlers had drawn weapons, and I like a fool had drawn my own revolver in the hope of intimidating them. In the fight my pistol was accidentally discharged. The rest was easy; the Italians were only too glad to support the charge against me and thereby save themselves from rigid investigation."

The young woman was horror-stricken.

"And some enemy actually laid that awful trap for you!"

"Yes,—Bull Hennessy, the man whose head I tried to break when I escaped, and who," he added vengefully, "was lucky enough to recover from the blow I gave him—the contemptible hound!"

"But why did Hennessy do such an awful thing?"

"Get well?" he asked, satirically, "or put up the job on me? If you mean the former, he got well merely because the devil looks after his children. If you mean the latter, he was jealous of me, and without cause."

"Surely," she said, hopefully, taking his hand in hers, "there must be some way to prove your innocence."

"There's no way," he rejoined, dejectedly, gently withdrawing his hand. "I would rather be a hunted beast and free, than taken back to prison. The slightest move in the direction of self-vindica-

tion would send me back to Sing Sing. There are only three persons who could prove me innocent—Bull Hennessy, the thug he hired to job me, and a fellow-prisoner in the pen. None of them would dare say a word. The convict, Pete Johnson, was my fellow-trusty. It was from him that I learned of the plot that sent me to prison. I begged him to testify in my behalf, but he refused. He naturally was loyal to his order. Then, too, he dared not betray Hennessy and his hired thug."

"But why could you not tell your story to the authorities?" she queried, eagerly.

"The authorities!" he exclaimed, contemptuously. "Why did I not complain to them? Simply because I was a convict. An accused man's word does not go far, and what show has a convicted man—a jail-bird? I almost had sunk into indifference and complete apathy when I learned the truth, and then—God! how I wanted to be free! I had no plans, but oh! I was mad for liberty! When I saw you that day in the prison and heard your voice, the world I had lost, all that I had been and all that life once meant to me, recurred to my mind in an overwhelming flood of recollection. When I saw that gate open, I had an almost maniacal impulse to escape. You know what happened.

"When I rose to the surface after plunging into the river, I found myself beneath a floating mass of wreckage that had drifted in shore. I remained concealed beneath it until dark. I then made for the railroad, swung under a passing freight train and took my first degree as a tramp by riding to New York on a brake-beam. I did not dare go near my mother, for I knew the police surely would be watching her home—and," he sighed, "I never saw her

again. I procured a change of clothing by sneaking down to the Bowery, posing as an escaped crook and enlisting the sympathies of my supposed kind by playing up my acquaintance with my fellow-trusty, Stubby.

"I came to Deadwood, and Robert Parkyn since has been a memory which I have tried hard to forget. Indeed, I almost had forgotten it, when you once more came into my life—you, whom also I vainly had tried to forget."

"But how did you manage to work your way out here?"

"I didn't work my way, I paid it. I am not proud of the way I obtained the money, but necessity knew no law and the money was hard and honestly earned. Incidentally I made good with the crooks who hid me from the police. I went against a pugilistic champion at Harry Hill's and received two hundred dollars for staying four rounds. He taught me the difference between a professional and an amateur, but as I got both the purse and the lesson, I was satisfied to take the beating."

"And you really remembered me?" she asked, softly.

"Remembered you? I have worn your image in my heart ever since I escaped from that hell on the Hudson—and long before."

He took from his pocket a card case, and from it an old and yellowed leaf of a magazine.

"Here is your picture, which I cut from a magazine and had carried for months before the events that put me in prison. You can imagine the emotion which rent me when I saw you. Your picture, with my dear old mother's, lay next to my heart at that very moment. It has lain there ever since. I

never have had the courage to destroy it, as much as I desired to forget. You typified the life I had lost —the life that rightfully belonged to me—the happiness that might have been mine."

He paused for a moment, overcome by a flood of emotions. Pulling himself together, he continued:

"Your face and the sound of your voice brought it all back to me that day in the prison. They brought it all back to me here, but I knew the hopelessness of it all, and day after day I have resolved to do the only thing left for me to do—and as often have I failed in my resolve."

"What do you mean?" she demanded, looking at him anxiously.

"Not that," he answered, reassuringly. "I am not a coward. I mean that I must move on."

"Move on? Surely you would not leave Deadwood!" she exclaimed, in alarm.

"Yes—it is the only logical thing to do."

She placed both her hands persuasively on his shoulders and gazed earnestly into his eyes.

"But this is the west, Robert Parkyn," she pleaded. "You know my creed—my faith in the west and its people. Why not try to feel that your life, and mine—our life—began here in these western hills? Better still, let us forget your past as one does a horrid dream, and let our lives begin here and now —at this very moment."

He looked away, but his resolution did not waver.

"That is impossible!" he answered, firmly, "and besides, you shall not be sacrificed on the altar of my misfortunes. Love, faith, sympathy — noble emotions all! Too noble to be abused. When skeletons creep into the family closet, it's bad enough, but to deliberately build one's hearth in a charnel

house! Why, it would be sheer insanity! I must go away from the Hills; it is only fair to you—and only humane to myself. There is no one but you and Tom to regret, for my mother is dead—she died soon after I escaped from Sing Sing—and Jack Halloran, the best friend I ever had, back yonder in the east, was killed by a blast the day before I left for the west. If my sky ever clears; when I can prove my innocence and show you a clean slate, I will come back to you, here, or wherever you are—if it is not too late."

Her hands fell to her sides, and she faced him in all the glory and confidence of self-reliant womanhood.

"Look into my eyes," she commanded, feelingly.

He turned and looked into her wonderful eyes, and when he saw the soul-light in their limpid depths he knew that she would wait.

"It never will be too late, Robert Parkyn," she murmured.

"I am human enough to be glad to hear you say that," he replied, slowly and decisively, "but not selfish enough to permit you to obligate yourself to even remember me. By leaving Deadwood I shall do the only thing in my power to correct the injustices of fate. To remain would bring only unhappiness to us both."

She knew enough of human character to know that he was inflexible in his determination but, womanlike, she fought on to the end.

"Is there nothing that can persuade you to remain?"

"Nothing."

"When are you going?" she inquired, dejectedly, as she comprehended the finality of his answer.

"Just as soon as I can arrange my affairs. That will not take long, a week or two at most. I want to provide for the working of my mine. It has not been very profitable so far, but I have faith in it, and feel that it yet will turn out right. I hope to so arrange matters that, if my faith ever is justified, I can participate in the fruits of my labors—and I need those fruits, I assure you. And now, Miss Weatherson, I'm going to leave you to finish your work. If you will permit me, I will call for you later and escort you home."

"Please do," she said, extending her hands.

He silently pressed her hands for a brief instant, then slowly went his way up the road that wound through the hills backing the school grounds.

The young woman, torn with conflicting emotions and with tears in her lovely eyes, watched him until he was lost to sight among the trees and rocks that flanked the road.

Just at the moment when Parker left Miss Weatherson, Jim Atherton appeared on the road that led townward. He noticed the young couple as they parted, and stopped short. With a sardonic smile he, too, watched the young miner as he wended his upward way.

"So, my fine jail bird," he muttered viciously, to himself, "you've been singing a song for the pretty little school-ma'am, eh? I'll see if I can't improve her taste in music."

Still sneering he slowly walked towards the young woman.

As Miss Weatherson, with a deep sigh, turned to enter the school-house, she saw Atherton approaching. She gave a start of surprise and stood stock still, in silent astonishment. Noting that she saw

him, he composed his features and was as bland as oil.

"You seem surprised to see me, Miss Weatherson," he said, with exaggerated politeness.

"I—I confess that I really was not expecting to see you here again, Mr. Atherton."

"Indeed?" he sneered, "I'm sorry to have disturbed you."

"I really have some work to finish, sir, and shall have to ask you to excuse me."

"Surely your work will not suffer if you devote a moment to me."

"Possibly not, if it *is* but a moment."

The coolness of her manner and the steadiness of her gaze would have disconcerted a man less case-hardened than Jim Atherton. His assurance, however, rarely deserted him.

"Won't you be seated?" he asked, indicating the boulder.

"Thank you, sir, I prefer to stand."

He laughed in a most irritating way.

"Oh, very well—just as you like," he replied, insolently. "I'm still unpopular with you, evidently. My visit is not quite so welcome as that of the party who just left you, eh?"

She looked him over with withering contempt for a few seconds.

"Since you compel me to say it, sir," she spiritedly replied, "most emphatically, no!"

"If he should ask you the same question that I did a few evenings ago," he went on, with sublime impudence, "you'd give him an answer quite different from the one I received."

The young woman drew herself up proudly and her eyes flashed with righteous indignation.

"That is a matter which I do not care to discuss with you, Mr. Atherton. A man is entitled to ask a woman what her sentiments are toward himself—no more. You have enjoyed that privilege and—well, don't be a cad, sir."

Atherton was almost livid with rage, but succeeded in partially controlling himself.

"So, it has gone that far, has it?" he exclaimed, hotly. "Well, I am going to be fairer to you than you have been to me. I offered you my love—you not only turned me down, but have expressed an antipathy for me that is not flattering to my self-esteem. I'm only human, and when a man's vanity is hurt—"

"I did not want to wound you," she rejoined, earnestly. "I gladly would have avoided telling you the truth—that you repelled me—but you forced it upon me, and what else could I do? You are not at all graceful or convincing in your love-making, Mr. Atherton."

"All right, let it stand that way, Miss Weatherson," he replied, with transparent hypocrisy—"For your own sake, I'm willing to overlook your cruel and unjust treatment of myself. I still love you, and I'm going to try to save you from making a terrible mistake."

"That is very kind of you," she said, calmly. "Pray, what is the calamity from which you would save me?"

"The bestowal of your affections on a man who is unworthy of you—the man who has just left you."

"Ah, indeed! What is wrong with him?"

"Believe me, Miss Weatherson," he replied, with a deceitful semblance of sincerity, "it is only pure friendliness and a sense of duty that impel me to in-

form you that Bob Parker is an escaped criminal—a murderer. He's wanted at Sing Sing."

The young woman's lip curled with contempt, and she did not try to conceal her disgust.

"I appreciate your disinterested regard, Mr. Atherton," she answered, satirically, "but you are just a little late with your information. Mr. Parker has just told me the circumstances of his unjust conviction and imprisonment. I already knew the details of his sudden departure from Sing Sing."

Atherton was astounded.

"What! You knew them?" he cried.

She smiled blandly, with thorough enjoyment of his discomfiture and bewilderment.

"Yes, I knew them," she reiterated, quietly, "you see, I assisted him to escape."

"See here, Miss Weatherson," he demanded, furiously, "are you making game of me, or are you—"

"Crazy?" she interrupted. "No—nor am I making game of you. But Mr. Parker will return shortly. Suppose you ask him if I did not aid him in escaping from prison. He'll be glad to solve the riddle for you."

By a supreme effort Atherton barely managed to suppress an oath.

"I can't quite see the joke, Miss Weatherson. I can hardly believe that Parker was fool enough to tell you his story."

"Mr. Parker is no fool—nevertheless he did tell me his story."

"And you still love him?"

She looked him through and through, with utter scorn.

"I suspected that I loved him before I heard his story," she answered, serenely. I was pretty cer-

tain that I loved him after he had told it—and now that I hear it from your lips, I am absolutely sure that I love him."

"You! You love a jail-bird!" he exclaimed, contemptuously.

"There are things that are worse than jail-birds," she cuttingly retorted. "For instance, human hawks and buzzards. Let me tell you something, sir: If Bob Parker were twice guilty, I would love him for the contrast he presents to such a creature as you. As I believe him to be innocent, your cowardly attempt to injure him makes me worship him."

Atherton now was perfectly infuriated. He took a step towards her as if to offer violence, but succeeded in curbing himself.

"So, you not only spurn my love, but you deliberately insult me!" he stormed. "Very well, we'll see if you'll love your jail-bird caged as well as you love him free. You'll have a chance to decide that before many days. The authorities at Sing Sing won't mind sending for him."

The young woman was not in the least frightened by Atherton's furious resentment of her scathing denunciation.

"If some men should say that, Mr. Atherton," she rejoined, coolly, "I should be greatly concerned lest an innocent man be sent back to prison, but I am not in the least alarmed, for I think you are a coward."

"A coward!" he roared, "a coward!"

"Yes, a coward," she reiterated, calmly. "You will not dare betray Bob Parker so long as you are in the Hills. If you betray him elsewhere—well, the danger to which he will be exposed will be more than compensated for by your absence from Dead-

wood. And your absence will be permanent, if I know the temper of our men and correctly estimate your regard for your own safety."

By this time, Atherton had completely regained control of himself, and was as cool as if he had been engaged in a shady business deal, in which matters his *sang froid* was proverbial.

"You forget, my dear young woman," he said, patronizingly, that there is supposed to be a semblance of law and order, even in this God-forsaken town. I doubt if even here, a law-abiding man would endanger his life by exposing an escaped murderer and bringing him to justice. And," he continued, malevolently, "there are other ways of—"

"Here comes Mr. Parker now. He'll be glad to hear your plans," she interrupted, significantly.

A moment later Parker turned the corner of the school-house, and seeing a man with Miss Weatherson, paused abruptly.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Weatherson," he said, I did not know that—Oh, hello! Atherton. How are you?"

"How are you, Parker?" growled Atherton, sulkily.

Parker turned inquiringly to the young woman.

"I trust I am not *de trop.*"

"Not in the least. Mr. Atherton," she said, meaningly, "was just bidding me adieu as you came up."

"Yes," returned Atherton, through his clenched teeth, and desperately trying to retain his equipoise, "I—I was just going, so I will say good evening, Miss Weatherson."

The young woman bowed coldly, and with an insolent nod to Parker, who barely acknowledged the salutation, Atherton departed towards town.

The young couple paid no further attention to the unwelcome visitor, who, when he reached the concealment of the trees a little distance down the road, turned and glared vindictively at the pair.

"I'll pay my debts to you some day, Mr. Robert Parkyn—alias Bob Parker—and don't you forget it," he growled ferociously, to himself.

Atherton shook his fist at the objects of his wrath and with a final wicked glare in their direction hurried on his way.

Miss Weatherson grasped both of Parker's hands, and for a time was too overcome with emotion to speak.

She finally found her voice and sobbed, almost hysterically:

"That man knows!"

"Great God! Atherton? He knows my—"

"He has just told me your story."

"Atherton told you my story?" he repeated, mechanically.

"Yes, and oh, Mr. Parker!—Robert!—I'm afraid of him—for you," she said, tearfully.

The young man gently drew away his hands.

"So am I," he replied, with deep concern. "He will either expose, or attempt to blackmail me—perhaps both. Surely you see now, Miss Weatherson, that I *must* leave the Hills—and very soon."

She at last instinctively knew that they both would be compelled to submit to what apparently was the inevitable.

"Yes, you are right! You must leave Deadwood—at once, if you can."

They clasped each other's hands and gazed into each other's eyes with the mutual sympathy and

understanding that only love and a common affection can give.

"Come, it is growing late," he said, gently. "Get your examination papers, lock your door and let us be going home."

"Shall we not wait for Ellen and Mr. Smithers?" she asked.

He smiled faintly at the simplicity of the question.

"No—they will not return. Ellen is a chaperon to the manner born, and Smithers is wiser than he looks—lucky dog!"

Lingeringly, and in silence, the couple walked homeward.

"You will arrange your affairs as quickly as you can, won't you?" pleaded the young woman, as they separated at the hotel.

"Yes," he promised, gravely, "and all the more speedily because I—well, because I feel that it would grieve you to know that I had returned to—to hell, Miss Weatherson."

Chapter XXVIII

SMITHERS MAKES A TEN STRIKE

Bob Parker's cabin and mine were located about a mile and a half from town, on the side of what, anywhere but in the Black Hills, would have been considered a mountain of quite respectable proportions.

The cabin was the typic miner's habitation—a very primitive affair of the shack order, built of roughly-hewn logs. The architectural defects of the structure, however, were redeemed by its picturesqueness.

On the front of the rude cabin, between the door and the little solitary window, was nailed a large wolf pelt. Against the wall, just beneath the trophy of the chase, was a long, rough pine bench, on which stood a capacious wooden water bucket, containing a long-handled tin dipper.

Underneath the bench was a suspicious-looking demijohn of mammoth size and inviting appearance which, being filled with a non-bibulous fluid, kerosene, made a fraudulent display of spirituous hospitality and good cheer.

On huge nails driven into the logs composing the front of the cabin hung a varied assortment of homely, more or less battered cooking utensils, and articles of raiment of various colors, which latter evi-

dently had experienced hard service and rude laundering.

Immediately in front of the shack, a few feet from the door, stood several smoothly-sawn stumps of immense trees, leaning against which were several business-like picks and shovels.

At the corner of the cabin was a barrel for the collection of rain water, and in what may be termed for courtesy's sake the dooryard, stood a saw-buck and several piles of fire-wood. Against one of these piles reclined a wood-saw and a much battered ax—that seemed to be struggling against an inclination to tumble down hill.

Tethered to a sapling behind the cabin was a couple of stubby little burros, patiently nibbling at the bushes and stubble.

A number of trees of large size and various kinds surrounded the cabin and bedecked the mountain behind it. A narrow, rocky and meandering trail led from the main road past the cabin and wound its upward way among the hills at the rear.

Higher up on the side of the mountain, a little removed from the cabin, was the opening of the mine which had cost its owner so many weary hours of arduous labor with so little tangible result. Below and in front of the mine was an enormous heap of worthless "tailings," excavated rock and earth that evidenced Parker's industry—and disappointment.

Early one morning, a week subsequent to the events related in the previous chapter, our distinguished friend, Mr. W. Ponsonby Smithers, might have been seen near the cabin blazing away with a revolver almost as large as a field piece, at an impro-

vised target composed of a full sheet of an old newspaper attached to a huge tree.

The Englishman had been blissfully enjoying himself since daylight, apparently unconscious of the approach of the breakfast hour. He was awkwardly shooting from the hip, had just fired a shot, had approached the tree and was critically examining the target to ascertain the amount of execution. On peering closely at the mark he was amazed at his own prowess.

"By Jove! I believe I hit the tree! I really do," he cried, gleefully, feeling for his discarded monocle. "And I hit it without me eye-glass!"

He examined his gun in amateurish fashion, reloaded it and then, stepping back to firing range, again shot at the target.

The weapon must have been clumsily held, for the recoil jarred Smithers' gun-hand most unmercifully, causing him to drop the pistol to the ground.

"My word!" he exclaimed, solicitously examining his hand and counting his fingers. "That *was* a ripper! Most extraor'nary, really! The bloomin' piece kicks like an elephant gun, don'tcher know! An' Horton said it was as gentle as a government mule!—what?"

He dawdled up to the tree and slowly circled around it, minutely examining the bark and the target in an obviously puzzled and near-sighted fashion.

"How extraor'nary, really!" he observed. "I don't believe I hit the bloomin' tree at all, an' that last one was a most marvelous discharge—top hole, don'tcher know."

Just as the last shot was fired, Parker appeared at the door of the cabin and noting the ludicrous

performance, laughed so vociferously that the object of his mirth surely must have heard it, had he not been so preoccupied with his revolver score.

"Hello! there, Smithers. Don't you want any grub? The flapjacks are getting cold, and I'll not cook another batch, mind that. Close that *schützen fest* and come to breakfast. I've finished mine."

"But I say, really. I'd like to hit that blawsted tree again, you know," protested the marksman.

"Oh, life's too short!" expostulated the young miner. "Come on in to breakfast, you blood-thirsty desperado! You ought to have had that long-suffering tree cut down by this time. Don't you know that lead costs money?"

"Yes, but Mr. Horton is teachin' me to shoot from the hip, an' I was doin' a bit of practicin'—what?" argued Smithers, as he picked up his weapon.

"And your blawsted gun got so bloomin' hot you couldn't hold it, eh?" chuckled the other. "Well, shooting won't warm up those flapjacks or keep the coffee hot, so get a move on you."

Smithers looked alternately at the gun and the target, gave his still aching fingers a final solicitous inspection and grudgingly followed his friend into the cabin, closing the door behind him.

Parker shortly reappeared, and going to the almost uninjured tree inspected the target.

"Well," he laughed, as he counted the hits, "if that tenderfoot partner of mine ever learns to handle that gun right and runs *amok*, he'll depopulate the Black Hills, but if Tom doesn't have better success in making a man-killer out of him than I'm having in teaching him to mine, life insurance rates won't go up much in this vicinity."

He went to one of the stumps in front of the cabin, selected from the assortment of tools leaning against it a pick and shovel and started toward the mine.

"Hello! there, Mr. Argonaut," called a deep voice.

Parker wheeled about and saw his friend, Tom Horton, laboriously toiling toward him up the path.

"Hello, yourself!" answered the young miner. "Why didn't you wait for the elevator—and where's your horse?"

"The nigger that runs the elevator is on strike, an' that fool horse o' mine has got a lame shoulder," puffed Horton, removing his hat and wiping the sweat from his face with the back of his formidable hand.

The two men shook hands as if vying with each other in an attempt to dislocate each other's arms.

"What brought you around at this time of the day, Tom?" queried Parker. "Has your star pupil, Smithers, been killing somebody? He was down town last night."

"Nope," chuckled Horton; "he ain't got anybody so far, but he's young yet, an' I 'have me hopes'."

"So, Mister Sheriff, you really are trying to make business for yourself by teaching him to shoot, eh? That was a lovely baby cannon you presented him with!"

"Say, Bob," snickered Horton, "ye'd oughter seen his face when I handed him that grown-up gun! Is he practicin' reg'lar?"

"Practicing? I should say he was! He's out every morning at daylight, blazing away at that tree yonder."

The sheriff went to the tree indicated and looked it over with the air of a connoisseur.

"Um—ah!" he commented. "He's hit the tree twice. That's not so bad fer a tenderfoot, even if he did miss the paper."

"Bad!" shouted the other. "Bad! Say, Tom, did you ever read the statistics of the number of shots per hit in a battle?"

"Seems ter me I have," chuckled the sheriff.

"Well," laughed Parker, "Smithers is a soldier, every inch of him. He's spent seven dollars for ammunition in less than that many days. Net results, two hits—and no bull's-eyes."

"Oh, he'll get there yet," returned Horton. "What luck are ye havin' makin' a miner of him?"

"He digs just as he shoots—with enthusiasm, and with a worse score. You've got me beat, Tom; he's hit the tree twice, but he hasn't yet struck anything in the mine but perfectly good rock and clean gravel."

Just at that moment the object of their conversation appeared in the doorway of the cabin, feeling for his departed eye-glass and gazing helplessly about.

"Oh, I say, Mr. Parker! Where's me bloomin' tools?"

"Right where you left them—by that stump over yonder," answered his partner, winking humorously at his friend. "You forgot to put them in the stove last evening."

"Thanks, awfully, old chap."

The Englishman proceeded to the stump, gathered up his tools and with pick on shoulder and shovel in hand was about to go to his work, when his eye fell on the sheriff.

"Well, by Jove!" he exclaimed with genuine joy, dropping his tools and rushing to the visitor with

both hands extended in hearty greeting. "Good mornin', Mr. Horton."

The caller gravely took Smithers's hands and shook them cordially.

"Call me Tom, Ponsy, old boy. You're not a tenderfoot anymore, an' we're good pals now, ye know."

"Are we, really? How extraor'nary! I'm glad to see you, Mr.—ah, Tom; very glad, don'tcher know."

"Me too, old chap," replied Horton. "How are ye gettin' on with yer shootin'?"

"Rippin'! Couldn't be better. My word! I wish I had time to show you me score. But I've got to get to work, I really have, don'tcher know. See you later, Mr.—ah, Tom."

The concsientious Smithers laboriously gathered up his implements, and supporting them against his legs, took out his pipe and lighted it.

"I say, Mr.—ah, Tom, old chap," he puffed, calmly. "Rawther clevah idea that, shootin' from the hip."

"Yes," acquiesced the sheriff. "*We* like it."

"Great idea—very!" repeated the Englishman as he leisurely strolled towards the tunnel.

"So long, Ponsy, old sox," the sheriff called after him.

Smithers stopped at the mouth of the tunnel, and gazed reflectively at Horton.

"I say, Mr.—ah, Tom, happy thought, that 'government mule', very! But I'm not quite keen on mules, don'tcher know. Rawther prefer 'Mary's little lamb'—Ha! Ha!"

He disappeared in the mine, leaving his two friends convulsed with merriment.

"In a hurry to get to work, old man?" quietly asked the sheriff, when they had composed themselves.

"Why, no. I'm never in a hurry when you're around, my dear friend."

"Honors are easy, Bob," soberly rejoined Horton. "Thought I'd run up an' have a little chat with ye, before ye hunted yer hole."

The sheriff seated himself upon a stump in front of the cabin. The young miner threw himself on the bench opposite his friend and reclining at ease looked expectantly at him. Both men automatically dove into their pockets after their pipes, filled and lit them.

"See here, Bob, what's this I hear about yer pullin' out o' the race fer Sheriff?" questioned Horton, solicitously, extinguishing his match and flinging it down the hill.

"Straight goods, Tom," answered Parker, calmly puffing and blowing fluffy smoke-rings to the wind. "I would have told you first, only—well, you big-hearted old mule, you; I knew just how you'd balk. I haven't forgotten how you bullied me into promising to run against you when the boys put it up to me. So I thought I'd inform them first—and get you to back me up."

"The boys? Hell!" fumed the sheriff. "They're the sorest lot o' roosters ye ever saw. Why, it was them that sent me here."

"They sent you here!"

"Sure," laughed Horton. "They want a contest that'll excite some bettin' interest at the books. They say they'll win, either way, which ever side they bet on. Some of 'em 'll lose their bets, but everybody'll be satisfied with the sheriff-elect."

"No use, Tom," replied the young miner, firmly, "I've made up my mind—I'm not going to run. My candidacy was ridiculous, anyhow. You're the man to succeed yourself in office, and you've got to do it."

The sheriff's face darkened in dogged determination, and his jaw set like a chilled-steel vise.

"An' I've made up *my* mind, Mr. Bob Parker, an' ye're goin' ter run! Savvy? If ye don't I'll arrest ye fer—well, fer treason. D'ye s'pose I wanter sit in another game o' political solitaire like the last election? If you don't run, Jeff Peters will, an' ye know what I think o' him."

"Jeff Peters! A fine chance he'd have against you," snorted Parker, derisively.

"Sure, I know," admitted Horton, "but that ain't the point. I want ter show the boys a new kind o' campaignin'. I want a contest, an' I want a feller like you on the other side o' the table. As there ain't any other feller in Deadwood that just suits my ideas, why it's up ter you, Bob—an' I'm bettin' ye'll lick me, too. Ye needn't quit minin' either, fer I'll take your job off'n yer hands when ye take office—share an' share alike, as ter the minin'—an' you can grub-stake me out o' yer salary, if it comes ter a show down."

"But, Tom," protested his friend, "I can't run. You see I—well, it's absolutely impossible."

"Impossible nothin'! Why is it impossible?" demanded the sheriff.

"Well, you see, Tom. I—"

"Oh, spit 'er out, Bob!"

"I'm going to leave Deadwood, old man," the young miner blurted out in desperation.

Horton jumped to his feet as if stung, and stared blankly at him.

"Ye're goin' ter leave Deadwood!" he finally exclaimed. "You! Say that again—an' say it slow."

"I'm in dead earnest, Tom."

"Well, I'll be d——d! For the love o' Mike! What for?"

The young miner rose to his feet and going to Horton laid an affectionate hand on his shoulder.

"Tom, he said, slowly, "there are some things I can't talk over with anyone—even with you, my best friend. Matters have so shaped themselves that I must get out of the Hills, and at once."

"'Must' is an ugly word, Bob. D'ye need some more dough? If ye do, the sheriff's still drawin' down some unearned spondulix that ain't exactly workin' nights."

"No, Tom; thank you just the same," replied Parker, appreciatively, "I'll have enough for bare necessaries in the future, thanks to my new partner —and you know my habits."

"What's up then, Bob, are ye losin' confidence in that mine? If ye are, why there's plenty other places in the Hills where a feller can drive a tunnel, ye know."

"Confidence!" exclaimed Parker—"Confidence! Believe me, Tom Horton, if a man can't make a ten-strike in that hole, sooner or later, he'd better give up the Black Hills as a bad job. Tom—I *know*. I'm not mining by guess, pot luck or instinct."

"Then what the deuce are ye quittin' fer?"

"I'm not going to quit the mining game. I've given Smithers an interest, as you know, and I'll leave somebody to help him. He's honest, a hard worker and, jesting aside, he's slowly but surely learning the rudiments of the game. Besides, any-

body who tries to jump claim on him will get a taste of British bulldog, I'll guarantee that."

During this speech the sheriff looked his friend fixedly in the eye.

"Look here, Bob," he said, skeptically, "what sort of a deal are ye framin' up? Just give me a pointer, so I can set in the game."

"I've told you all there is to tell."

"Not by a damned sight ye hain't!—an' I ain't laughin' when I say it, neither," doggedly opposed the sheriff. "Come across, now!"

The young miner returned to the bench, dejectedly threw himself upon it, and resumed his smoking.

"No use, Tom," he expostulated, shaking his head, "you can't even get me mad enough to talk back."

"Then there *must* be something serious in the wind, sure enough," persisted the sheriff. "Come, let go—an' get down ter brass tacks."

Horton scratched a match on his trousers and with great deliberation lit his pipe and puffed away at it like a steam engine laboring up a grade.

"Say, Bob," he went on, looking away from his friend and towards the mine.

Parker raised his head and looked inquiringly at him.

"Yes?"

Horton's face plainly showed his anxiety, but he puffed away like mad at his pipe.

"No bad news from Noo York, I hope?" he asked, between puffs.

"From New York!" ejaculated the astonished young miner. "What do you mean?"

"Why, I thought p'raps you'd heard somethin' that —that ye sort o' wanted ter talk over with—with old Tom, you know."

It was with difficulty that Parker restrained an expression of astonishment.

"I don't quite get you, Tom."

"Ye don't, eh? Well, when a sick man needs strong doses I b'lieve in givin' 'em, an' givin' 'em d——d quick, so—"

The young man looked in apprehensive expectancy at his friend, who, without looking up, was patting down with his forefinger the smouldering contents of his pipe.

"Say, Bob," asked Horton, quietly, "inquirin' as a private citizen an' a personal friend, did you really kill that Dago?"

Parker started up as if impelled by a spring, and confronted his friend, who immediately faced about and awaited his answer.

"Good God, Tom!—then you know. Atherton has—"

"Yes, Tom Horton knows, my dear boy—but he hain't told the sheriff yet."

The young miner tottered back to the bench and buried his face in his hands.

"Face the music, Bob!" commanded Horton, with a business-like ring in his voice. "Did—you—kill—that—Dago?"

Parker excitedly sprang to his feet and with flashing, indignant eyes faced him.

"Heavens, man! Do you think I—?"

"Sh—h!" cautioned Horton. "Don't talk so loud. The sheriff might hear you."

The young man calmed himself and went on quietly.

"Tom, I'm as innocent as you are."

"Alludin' ter that partic'lar shootin', o' course,"

grinned the sheriff, satirically, knocking the ashes from his pipe and rising.

"That sounds mighty good, my boy. Say it again, an' say it slow. Did—you—kill—that—Dago?"

"No, Tom—so help me God!" replied the young miner, earnestly and with deep emotion. "I was the victim of a conspiracy. You see—"

Horton, with his face beaming ecstatically, joyfully grabbed his friend by both shoulders and shook him until he tore several buttons from his shirt.

"Never mind the yarn!" he cut in, delightedly. "Some other time'll do fer that. Ye didn't do it, an' that's enough joy fer the present. Tom Horton won't have ter ask the sheriff ter let ye break away, an' fire blank ca'tridges at ye while ye're doin' it."

"So," commented Parker, bitterly, "Atherton already has begun his dirty work, has he? I suppose by this time the whole town knows the story."

The sheriff's lip curled contemptuously, and there was a steely glitter in his dark eyes.

"Don't ye ever believe it, my boy," he said, grimly, "I accident'ly heard that newspaper feller, Gordon, tellin' the story to that damned skunk, Atherton, an' I butted in. I don't think they'll shoot their mouths off none—I told 'em just where they'd get off if they did."

Parker was thrilled through and through by the loyalty and manliness of his friend.

"And you protected me without knowing whether I was guilty or not?"

Horton's face expanded in a cavernous grin, and he nodded affirmatively.

"Yep—Tom Horton didn't care a cuss whether ye was guilty or not—I don't know how the sheriff would ha' acted. Anyhow," he chuckled, "them

stiffs won't blab. If they do, the sheriff may have ter arrest me fer violent conduct."

"Ah! but I'm not so sure about Atherton."

"What d'ye mean? Has that skulkin' coyote shot off his mouth?"

"Not where it will hurt any, Tom, so let's not talk about that. But, my friend, you can see plainly that I'll have to go."

"Go nothin'!" opposed Horton, contumaciously, "ye'll stay right here, that's what ye'll do! Noo York's a long way off, an' they'll have a monkey an' parrot time a-gettin ye. Savvy? You're goin' ter be elected Sheriff, hear me talkin', an' if they notify the new sheriff ter collar Bob Parker, why he an' his friend Tom, an' the rest o' the boys'll give 'em one peach of a run fer their money. Besides, if ye stand pat, somethin' may happen ter set things right. There's a whole lot o' things turns up in this world besides people's toes."

The young miner fervently clasped his friend's hand.

"Tom," he ejaculated, huskily, "you're the best and bravest fellow in the whole wide world!"

"Nope," contradicted Horton, shaking his leonine head deprecatingly, "just the friend o' the best feller in the world, that's all."

"Yes, and what sort of a hound would I be to drag you into my troubles?" exclaimed Parker, decisively. "I won't do it, Tom! I'm going to leave. It's the only decent thing to do. And by the way," he asked, gloomily, "you don't want to run against Jeff Peters—how about running against a jail-bird? I am going to hike out and give you a clear field; that's all there is to it."

The sheriff resumed his seat upon the stump and painstakingly refilled his pipe.

"See, here, Bob," he said, hesitatingly and with evident embarrassment, "you—you—Well," he blurted, in sheer desperation, "you're in wrong all around! There's somethin' else besides yer mine and the election that oughter make ye stand behind yer guns."

"Something else! What do you mean, Tom?"

The sheriff touched a match to his pipe and with calm deliberation began smoking.

"Miss Weatherson," he rejoined, ostentatiously puffing smoke rings in rapid succession and narrowly scrutinizing his friend's face.

Miss Weatherson!" exclaimed the astonished Parker, "why,—what—?"

"Come, Bob! quit yer stallin'," the sheriff interrupted, quietly. "You an' me ain't kids; we're grown men—an' good friends, an' we might as well get down ter cases. That girl's in love with ye, an' you know it, Bob Parker, unless ye're as big a fool as —as I've been, an' you're in love with her, an' *she* knows it."

"Has she ever said so?" evaded Parker.

"No, but a blamed fool can see—sometimes. Even that yeller pup of a pencil-pusher, Gordon, got onter the situation before he'd been in town twenty-four hours. The whole town was onter you an' the girl an'—an' me, long before."

"Then, can't you see, Tom, that I *must* leave Deadwood? What right have I, a social pariah, even to think of a girl like her? Let me go, Tom, and—and —let me give you your chance. Education is not all. The artificial refinements of life are not all. True manhood and womanhood are greater than social

frills and intellectual Dead Sea fruit that fools call culture. She and I both have learned that. Take your chance, Tom," he entreated. "It's due you—and due her."

"Ferget it, Bob! I'm clean off the slate. I hain't got even a look in," answered the obdurate Horton. Ye're goin' ter stay an' take *your* chance. Ye're innocent o' that Dago business, an' anyhow, what Miss Weatherson don't know, won't hurt her none."

"But she does know, Tom," quietly replied the young miner.

"What!" roared the sheriff, wrathfully, leaping to his feet and instinctively putting his hand to the butt of his .44. "Has that sneak, Atherton—?"

"Yes," calmly interposed the other, "but he was a little late with his story—I already had told her."

Horton collapsed back on the stump in limp and helpless amazement.

"You!" he sputtered, "you told her? Well—I'm —d——d!"

"I couldn't help it, Tom. We came to an understanding about—well, about the way we felt towards each other. I had to be a man and tell her my story."

"Well?" said Horton, sitting up straight and anxiously awaiting the answer.

"She has faith in my innocence," was the proud reply.

"Then what the devil d'ye want ter leave Deadwood for, if everything's on the level with her, an' it hain't changed her none?"

"Because Atherton saw her later, and also told her that I was an escaped convict and wanted in the east," rejoined Parker, his face reflecting the tensity of his emotions. "When she learned that Ath-

erton knew my story she—well, she agreed with me, that I must leave the Hills."

Horton slowly rose to his feet, pugnaciously squared his broad shoulders, expanded his chest and tightened his belt another hole.

"Hate ter disagree with a lady, Bob," he said, deliberately, his eyes flashing wickedly and his voice ringing like highly-tempered steel, "but I'm a-goin' ter do it, just this once. If you try to get away I'll slap ye in the calaboose. My business is ter keep an eye on desperadoes like you, an' I'm a-goin ter do it. Ye're under arrest an' on parole. D'ye get me?"

Parker silently wrung his friend's hand for a moment, not daring to trust himself to speak.

"Tom Horton!" he finally ejaculated, "you're a wonder! and I'll show you that I'm game. I'm going to stick."

"That's a little more like it, Bob."

Hardly had the sheriff uttered these words when Miss Weatherson and Ellen came into view down the trail.

"Hello!" he exclaimed, "speakin' o' angels, look who's comin' up the trail."

The ladies were completely winded when they came to the top of the ascent, and stopped for a moment to recover their breaths, meanwhile waving their hands in greeting to the two friends, who joyfully went to meet them.

"Have we surprised some plotting brigands, gentlemen?" Miss Weatherson laughingly demanded.

"Surprised? Yes," admitted Parker. "As to our being brigands, I am not so sure. Tom was just telling me some of his blood-curdling adventures, and I don't know whether he is the ghost of Dick Turpin, a Roman gladiator on the warpath, or the Baron Münchausen re-incarnated."

"Ye—yes," stammered Horton, red to the ears with embarrassment, "I was just a tellin' Bob about a big stage hold-up I was in once."

Parker led the way to his humble abode and showed the ladies to seats, Miss Weatherson choosing a stump in the dooryard, and her young companion appropriating the bench in front of the cabin.

"This is indeed an honor, Miss Weatherson," said the young miner, warmly.

At this Ellen sat up very straight and pouted as prettily as only a little Irish lass could.

Parker noted the young girl's affectation of ruffled dignity and hastened to make amends.

"And Miss McGinnis," he laughed, bowing profoundly.

"I presume that I ought to explain our visit," remarked the school-teacher, mischievously. "Ellen suddenly has developed an interest in mineralogy, and as it is Saturday and there is no school, I'm chaperoning her in her investigations."

Ellen's eyes gave signs of what might have been an embarrassing retort, and Miss Weatherson took her cue with great celerity.

"And she is reciprocating," admitted the teacher.

"Say, Bob," suggested the sheriff, with a knowing chuckle, "I guess it's up ter me ter crawl inter that black hole in the ground an' capture a real live, blue-blooded mineral hunter fer the ladies."

Horton started towards the mine, but just at that moment Smithers, with a broken pick in one hand and a huge piece of ore in the other, appeared at the mouth of the tunnel. He stood blinking at the sun for a moment and then came dawdling towards the group.

"Here he comes now!" whispered Parker, in an aside. Let's surprise him. Hide yourselves, ladies!"

They instantly sought places of concealment, Miss Weatherson dodging behind the shack and Ellen rushing into the cabin, from which she peeped at her friends through the crack of the half-open door.

Smithers ambled up, carrying the broken pick and gingerly holding the lump of rock.

"Fine luck!—what?" he lamented, "I've broken me bloomin' pick! My word! We've got a blawsted iron mine, what? Look at this piece of rock! It's as hard as flint, it really is, don'tcher know!"

The ladies peered from their places of concealment, quivering with barely repressed merriment.

With admonishing finger on lip, Parker cautioned them not to betray their presence.

"Well," he said, jestingly, "I'm glad you've at least struck something besides gravel and plain quartz, so don't complain of hard luck. Let me see your find," and he reached for the specimen.

The young miner casually glanced at the piece of rock and gave a start of astonishment.

"Good Lord! Tom!" he yelled, excitedly; "look at this!"

"Holy smoke!" cried Horton, the instant his eye rested on the specimen.

Parker grabbed his partner by the arm with a fierce clutch that made him squirm.

"Where did you get this stuff?" he demanded.

"I uncovered a beastly ledge," drawled Smithers, with exasperating slowness. "I was diggin' around it an' accidentally struck it with me pick' an' broke the blawsted—"

Parker let go of the wondering Englishman's arm,

dashed madly for the tunnel and disappeared in the darkness of the mine.

Smithers looked blankly after his partner, and as the latter was swallowed up in the depths of the tunnel, dropped the broken pick, took out his briar, filled and lit it and calmly began smoking.

"Excitable chap, that—very," he remarked, nonchalantly.

"Excitable!" exclaimed the sheriff, brandishing the specimen, "D'ye know what ye've struck, ye chump? Free millin' ore that'll show a cool thousand t' the ton, if it'll show a cent!"

"Really, now!" drawled the other, seating himself on the stump and smoking as coolly as if things mundane interested him not at all. "Does there happen to be any gold in it, d'ye think?"

"Gold in it! Gold in it!" gasped the other. "Why you d——?"

Suddenly remembering the proximity of the ladies, who had remained concealed during the enactment of the little comedy drama, Horton suppressed with his hand the justifiable profanity that was imminent.

Parker reappeared at the mouth of the tunnel with several more pieces of the ore in his hands and wildly tore back to his friends. Rushing up to Horton the over-joyed miner violently shook him by the shoulders as if he were a rag doll in the paws of a grizzly bear.

"We've struck it at last, old man! I knew it was there, somewhere!" he shouted, letting go of the sheriff and throwing his arms around Smithers. "Wake up, you lobster!" he yelled in his partner's ear; "you've struck the mother lode!"

"Beg pawdon, but you're rawther excited, you

know. You've knocked me bloomin' pipe out of me mouth."

Smithers calmly disengaged himself from Parker's embrace, picked up his pipe, relit it and asked, languidly.

"What was it I hit, Mr. er—partner?"

"The mother lode, you chunk of inanimate protoplasm, you!"

"Really, now! But I didn't mean to hit her—what? Was she hurt much?"

"Isn't he the limit, Tom?" despairingly exclaimed the young miner.

"Ellen!" he called. "See if you can't wake up Smithers; he's in a trance."

Miss Weatherson and her protegé now revealed themselves and the Englishman stared at them in characteristically mild astonishment. He rose from the stump in extreme deliberation and ambled to meet them.

"My word! If here isn't Miss Ellen!—an' Miss Weatherson," he added, bowing gallantly.

"I sincerely congratulate you on your good fortune, Mr. Smithers," said the school-teacher, warmly, shaking his hand.

"And you too, dear," she said to the young girl, putting her arm around her.

"Really, now; I don't quite—" began Smithers, plainly obtuse.

"Of course you don't, you blamed tenderfoot!" hopelessly interjected his partner.

"But I say now, Mr., er—partner—I'm no tenderfoot, don'tcher know."

"Oh, yes you are, 'rawther'," exclaimed Ellen with a laugh, grasping him by the hand and dragging him to a seat beside her on the bench, where they soon became engaged in a conversation that was animated

on one side, at least, and doubtless very interesting to both.

Horton noted the actions of the pair and chuckled softly as he expertly weighed the piece of ore in his hand.

"Say, Bob," he remarked, "I wonder if this stuff won't bring England and Ireland somewhat closer together?"

"'Rawther'," replied his friend, dryly. Mrs. McGinnis probably will break her record by not quarreling with the mother lode—which will be pretty good behavior, considering the sex of both."

"No jokes at the expense of our sex, please," interposed Miss Weatherson, merrily, "and be especially careful what you say about Mrs. Mac.—She and I have formed an offensive and defensive alliance against mere man."

"You little traitor!" muttered Parker in her pretty ear.

Chapter XXIX

SMITHERS MAKES A NEAR-BULL'S-EYE

There never was a jar of perfectly good ointment but that a fly landed in it. Rarely does humanity enjoy happiness for long without a discordant note creeping in. The devil always finds willing hands to do his work, and his specialty is discords.

Bob Parker and his friends were but fairly launched in their pleasant occupation of mutual congratulations and plans for the future—of which latter there naturally were many, commingled with rosy day-dreams that remained half-formed and unexpressed—when Tom Horton chanced to look up and saw a man standing in an attitude of uncertainty a few steps away down the trail. To his astonishment he recognized the newspaper correspondent, Gordon.

Noting that he had been seen, the young fellow hesitatingly came up to the party and embarrassedly, but gracefully, raised his hat.

"Beg your pardon if—if I have intruded," he stammered—"I was looking for—for Mr. Horton."

"Well, young feller," said that person, icily, "as I'm the man ye're lookin' fer, ye're at the end o' yer prospectin', I reckon. What can I do for ye?"

"I wanted to see you about the conversation we had the other evening at the hotel."

"All right," snapped Horton, abruptly, "blaze away."

"But—" Gordon hesitated, reddening up and looking doubtfully at the rest of the party.

"It's all in the family, so cut loose," said Horton, with quick comprehension, "An' see that ye talk mighty durned straight," he added meaningly, with just a shade of promise of dire results if the young fellow should prove to be anything *but* "straight."

This aroused the reporter. He drew himself up with a dignified air and his eyes shone in a way that distinctly appealed to the sheriff.

"That's what I'm here for, sir," he flashed, spiritedly.

"All right, straight it is, then," the sheriff bluntly responded.

"I want you to know that I'm not really a cad, Mr. Horton," the young man went on earnestly. "I'm here to tell you that I'm heartily ashamed of my part in that transaction and—"

"Spoken like a man!" the sheriff broke in, giving Gordon a vigorous hand-shake. "Go ahead with yer yarn, young feller."

The reporter again looked questioningly at Parker and the ladies.

"But," he objected, doubtfully, "I really shouldn't like to—"

Parker interrupted by coming forward and coolly facing him.

"Go on, sir," he said, calmly. "I know all about your conversation with Atherton, and also Mr. Horton's part in it—and Miss Weatherson knows my story. What that yellow hound, Atherton, didn't tell her, I did, so you can be quite at ease."

This was a hard facer for the newspaper man.

What!—Atherton told Miss—?"

"Miss Weatherson? Yes."

Gordon's jaws came together viciously, and the

expression of his eyes boded ill for his quondam friend and co-plotter.

"The infernal scoundrel!" he exclaimed vindictively, between his clenched teeth.

"Move we make it unanimous!" cried the sheriff, approvingly. "Ye're makin' a bully good start, young feller. Ease up on the bit and sock in the spurs!"

The correspondent manfully went on with his explanation and apology.

"I just wanted to say I'm mighty sorry I ever told Atherton that story. The newspaper instinct, fool thoughtlessness and a mistaken sense of what I owed the man for—for—"

"Yes, I heard all about that on the evenin' aforesaid," Horton generously hastened to interpose.

The young fellow's eyes beamed his gratitude as he continued:

"So much by way of apology. Now, I'm willing to do all I can to square myself. I—well, I look at things a little bit differently since I got into this western atmosphere, and—"

"An' a man-killer don't look quite so bad as he used ter, eh?" sententiously interjected the sheriff.

"W—why, I wouldn't put it just—just that way, sir."

"Put it any way you like," said Parker, bluntly, "and don't lose your prejudice against man-killers. I'll not take it as personal, for I'm not in that class."

The young fellow gazed bewilderedly at him.

"Oh, wake up, Gordon!" impatiently continued the miner, "I didn't kill that Italian."

"But—but you were—"

"Convicted? Yes, and I was sent to the pen—and broke jail, but I was innocent all the same. A job

was put up on me by Bull Hennessy—and he landed me."

"Bull Hennessy?"

"Yes, Bull Hennessy. It's a long story, but I'll tell it to you later, if you care to hear it. Briefly, Hennessy was jealous of me, and without reason. He hired a thug, Butch Harris, to get me. The thug joined the construction gang on a job on the Central, of which I was the engineer, intending to do me in the usual way. The strike came on and he framed up something safer. He made a bunch of our Italian laborers drunk and they set to fighting. I rushed in to quell the disturbance and seeing that practically all the men were armed, I felt compelled to draw my own revolver. It accidentally went off in the mixup, the bullet boring a hole in the atmosphere, and striking nothing else, so far as I am aware. A man was killed during the fight; Butch Harris swore the murder onto me; the Guineas backed him up—and I went up the river. How I escaped, you saw in the newspapers. You may have written it up yourself, for all I know."

"Great heavens! Can that be true?" cried the now thoroughly amazed reporter.

"Which the same ain't a very perlite question, my esteemed young friend!" growled the sheriff, belligerently. "Ye can bet yer life it's true—an' I stand behind it, right on the flat o' both feet!"

Gordon deliberated for a moment, looking thoughtfully at Parker.

"I think I can see a way to make amends and set matters straight, Mr.—er, Parker, he remarked, slowly. "One good newspaper man with a police reporter training who goes after facts, is worth a dozen detectives—even clever ones. I'm going to get your case cleared up—or bust."

Parker dubiously shook his head.

"But how?" hopefully chorused the others.

"I'm going back to New York as soon as the Lord, the devil, or whoever presides over the destinies of newspaper men, will let me, and try to beat Atherton's little game. I'm not sure, but I suspect he already has written to the police authorities. What I'll dig up in the way of evidence, and what I'll do to Boss Hennessy'll be a plenty. I may lose my job, but if I land the stuff I'm after, I'll be able to tell even the New York Herald to go to—"

He caught himself just in time.

"Sing Sing," interjected Parker, glumly.

"See here, boy, d'ye mean it?" demanded Horton, seizing the young fellow by both shoulders and looking searchingly into his eyes.

"Surest thing you know, Mr. Horton."

"You're a brick, Gordon!" exclaimed Parker.

"Yes, an' he ain't a-goin' ter be thrown out among the 'bats,' either," the sheriff remarked, reassuringly. "He needn't worry about a job as long as he's representin' the—what's the name o' that mine over there, Bob?"

"The 'Josephine'," laughed his friend, with sudden inspiration, glancing affectionately at Miss Weatherson.

"Righto! You've got brains, Bob,—an' *some* nerve," grinned Horton, in pleasant acquiescence.

"I reckon the new assignment 'll pan out about as well as any he ever tackled, eh, Bob?" he continued, playfully poking the young miner in the short ribs with his thumb.

"I think it will, Tom, if my ribs hold out," gasped his friend, with a wince.

"Meanwhile," volunteered the sheriff, "seein' as how the mill hain't ground out much color from the

Josephine yet, I'll grub-stake our special police-reporter-correspondent-sleuth—if he needs it."

Miss Weatherson, who had been eagerly drinking in the conversation, went to Gordon and pressed his hands in heart-felt appreciation.

"You don't know what your interest means to—to Mr. Parker and—"

"I understand perfectly, Miss Weatherson," interjected the reporter, with delicate comprehension and evident warmth and sincerity.

"Meet me at the hotel this evening and bring Mr. Horton with you," he said, turning to Parker, "I want to get the full details of your case and map out my campaign. I shall leave on the morning stage."

The correspondent bade everybody adieu and started town-ward. He had gone only a little way when he stopped short and, after keenly glancing down the trail, gave a sharp exclamation, suddenly sprang back and turning rejoined the party.

"And the devil came also!" he exclaimed. "Here comes Atherton!"

"Atherton!" cried Parker in intense excitement, "hide yourselves, everybody! Get into the cabin, Tom!"

"He musn't see me here!" said Gordon, "I'll have to cut stick!" and he plunged down the hillside in front of the cabin and was soon lost to sight among the trees and rocks.

Smithers languidly rose from the stump where he was sitting beside his innamorata and, with great deliberation, ensconsced himself behind the luckless tree which absorbed so much of his time of mornings. Miss Weatherson disappeared behind the corner of the cabin, and Ellen hurried into the cabin, the sheriff following her with rather incautious slowness.

Horton stopped at the partially open door and uncertainly turned to his friend.

"You may need the sheriff, Bob."

"Don't you ever believe it, Tom," replied Parker, confidently.

"Where's yer gun?"

"On the table in the cabin, but never mind the gun."

"You'll take it all the same, my boy."

Horton dove into the cabin and raced back at a gallop with the belt and gun-filled holster.

"Here, you easy mark, strap 'er on!"

"All right, Tom, if it makes you feel any better."

He quickly fastened the belt around his waist, swinging the gun into proper position, and Horton, with a relieved expression, hurriedly returned to the cabin, stopping just within and anxiously peeking back at his friend from behind the almost closed door.

"Don't take a chance, Bob," he cautioned, solicitously.

"Don't worry, old man. Ever see a foot-ball game?" returned Parker, dryly.

"Yes, once."

"How did it strike you?"

"Didn't strike *me* at all," chuckled Horton, "it was them suckers that was playin' the game that got hit. But it reminded me of a saloon row, a prize fight, a wrestlin' match an' a lynchin bee, all rolled inter one nasty scrap."

"Well, I once was half-back on the Harvard team, and some folks thought I could go some. Just let that fellow start something, that's all."

"A foot-ball player, eh? God help Atherton!" laughed the sheriff.

"S—sh! Shut the door, Tom. Here he comes."

Horton closed the door and took a position where, through the corner of the window, he could watch the proceedings from within the cabin. Parker seated himself on the bench beneath the window, coolly took out his knife, picked up a piece of rock from a pile that lay near and began examining particles which he dug from its surface, meanwhile humming a popular air.

Atherton was on horseback. He appeared at the crest of the trail, dismounted, hitched his mount to a tree and slowly swaggered up to the cabin. Suddenly noticing Parker, he greeted him with an offhand, offensive familiarity which cost that gentleman a tremendous effort to contain himself and suppress the desire to kick the fellow down the hill.

"Hello, Parker!"

"Good morning, Atherton," tranquilly responded the young miner. "Little off your regular beat, aren't you?"

"Never mind my beat," retorted the promoter, with an insolent air. "I'm here to talk over a little business with you, Parker."

"So? Why didn't you call during business hours? You see, I loaf forenoons and afternoons."

"Indeed," sneered the visitor. "Where did you contract the loafing habit—at the hotel up the Hudson?"

"'Hotel up the Hudson?' I don't quite follow you."

"What are you trying to give me, Parker," challenged Atherton, leering insultingly.

"Nothing—yet," laconically replied the young man, yawning widely and luxuriously stretching his magnificent limbs. "Warm day, isn't it, Atherton?"

He rose and pointedly turning his back to his visitor, calmly removed his belt with its holster and

gun and hung them on a convenient nail on the cabin door.

With malicious satisfaction, Atherton watched the young man apparently putting himself at his mercy.

"You fool!" he contemptuously muttered to himself.

Parker returned to his seat on the bench and with an ineffably bored expression lit his pipe and puffed away as unconcernedly as though no enemy was in sight.

"You say you have some business with me, Atherton?" he yawned, with a fine show of indolence, through the dense clouds of tobacco smoke in which he had enveloped himself.

"Yes, and I'll make it brief."

"Pray do—I'm beginning to like your style. Fire away."

"A certain party by the name of Parkyn, is here in the Hills," continued the promoter with unmistakable malevolence. "He's wanted in New York. He's an escaped murderer from Sing Sing penitentiary. I want to give him a chance to make his get-away from Deadwood."

"Yes? That's very good of you, I'm sure. The gentleman ought to appreciate your friendly interest," remarked Parker, urbanely, "but just where do I come in?"

"You know very well where you come in, Mr. Robert—'Parker'," was the sneering reply.

"Ah! I see, you want Bob Parker to tell his friend, Parkyn, to get out of your way," suavely answered the young miner.

"Good guess! You're waking up," was the sarcastic rejoinder.

Parker rose to his feet and tensed his lithe, pow-

erful muscles like a big tiger-cat getting ready to spring.

"Yes—I'll be wide awake in a minute," he replied, ominously. "But suppose Parkyn won't leave, what then?"

"Then I'll see that he gets free transportation to New York—in bracelets."

Parker took an aggressive step toward his visitor and looked him straight in the eye.

"Speaking as the representative of Robert Parkyn, Jim Atherton," he said, coolly and incisively, "you will please go plumb—straight—to hell!"

"So, you're going to try to bluff me out, eh, Parkyn?" snarled Atherton, viciously. "Well, for a jail-bird that's hiding like a frightened rabbit, you've got your gall with you. All right, then, you can take your medicine!" He turned and started towards his horse.

"My word! Rude fellah that, don'tcher know," commented Smithers, under his breath, half revealing himself for a moment from behind his tree and then stepping back into concealment, from which he peered interestedly at his partner and the departing visitor.

Parker intercepted Atherton, getting between him and the animal, just as that worthy was about to unhitch his horse.

"What's your hurry, my philanthropic friend?" sneered the miner, caustically, "I want to remark before we go any further, that when I take medicine, it will not be from your spoon, you contemptible cur!"

"Say, Atherton," he coolly went on, without waiting for a reply, "were you ever man-handled?"

"No, and I'm not going to be, either."

"Oh—yes—you—are!" retorted Parker, with significant deliberation, drawing closer to his foe.

Atherton retreated backward, step by step, the now coldly-menacing young miner slowly following him, until they again were in front of the shack, Both men stopped and warily eyed each other.

"Better not start anything, Parker, the weather is still warm," said the promoter, glancing suggestively at the belt and gun hanging on the door.

The young man noticed the direction of his enemy's glance.

"Say, Atherton, do you know why I took off that gun?"

"Because you were a damned fool," chuckled Atherton, with a triumphant leer.

"No—not because I was a fool, but because I was wise—wise to you, and to Robert Parkyn's best interests. I knew what was coming—knew I'd be tempted—and I didn't propose to take any chances. I've had my lesson. I hate to kill even a rattlesnake—that's what saves you, my friend. If every man could have a taste of the hell I've gone through, the gun factories would be put out of business.

"But even going through a hell of body and mind, hasn't chilled my sporting blood any, Atherton," he continued, tensely clenching his fists and menacingly stepping closer to his foe. "What I'm going to do to you in about thirty seconds would make a railroad accident look like a Virginia reel at a butterfly ball."

"It would, eh? Two can play at that game, you damned murderer!" snarled Atherton savagely, with a backward spring and going to his hip pocket for his gun.

Parker was on the fellow like a flash, grappled with him, and catching his pistol hand twisted the

weapon from his grasp, threw it down the hill into the brush and hurled the assassin to the ground so hard that the fall knocked the wind completely out of him.

At this point Smithers stepped out of ambush and stood gaping at the scene.

"Most extraor'nary, really!" he drawled.

Like a true sportsman, Parker stood back a pace and waited for his enemy to rise.

"Humph!" he ejaculated, with satirical contempt; "It's a shame to take the money!"

Atherton managed to pull himself together and scrambled to his feet, puffing and blowing like an angry porpoise.

"I'll fix you for that, you damned jail-bird!" he shouted.

Drawing a formidable looking bowie from his inside coat pocket, he rushed like a maniac at Parker, with the keen, glittering blade uplifted to strike—and to kill!

Miss Weatherson gave a scream, and emerging from her place of concealment around the corner of the cabin, stood gazing at the encounter as if helplessly fascinated.

Horton left his place of observation at the cabin window and rushed frantically out of the door, drawing his gun as he ran.

He was about to fire at the assassin, when there was a loud report and the ruffan crumpled up and fell like a tree under the ax, with a ball through his chest!

Looking in the direction from which the shot was fired, the party saw the doughty Smithers, nursing his fingers and gazing curiously at his .44, which was lying smoking on the ground some distance

away, where it had been hurled by the recoil of the shot and his involuntary muscular effort.

Ellen, who had come to the cabin door and had been standing there almost paralyzed with fright, recovered herself and rushing to Smithers threw her arms about his neck.

"Oh, Ponsy! Ponsy! she snivelled, hysterically, burying her *retroussé* nose in the miner's coarse and by no means spotless shirt.

Miss Weatherson hurried to her lover, who was gazing in dumb astonishment at Smithers.

"Oh, Mr. Parker! Robert! are you hurt?" she cried, overwhelmed with anxiety and oblivious to everything save her concern for his safety.

"No, dear," he whispered, reassuringly, "and if I were, this would cure me," and he clasped her in his arms.

Horton saw and looked away for a brief instant. There were some things that even he, lion-hearted though he was, could not face off-hand. Deep down in the rugged, honest man's soul of him, he knew that true mating never could be one-sided and that all was as it should have been. He loved Bob Parker, and there was no envy, no bitterness in his heart. And yet—well, it was only human to regret that the fates had not decreed that he should be in his friend's shoes.

Smithers disengaged Ellen's energetic clasp from his neck, put one arm protectingly around her waist, and tranquilly surveyed the field of battle.

"Most extraor'nary!—what?" he commented wonderingly, looking alternately at his still smoking revolver and his professor of small-arms practice—the sheriff.

Horton replaced his gun in its holster and went to the wounded man, who was supporting himself

on one hand and painfully gasping for breath, the air whistling in and out of the hole in his lung and whipping the blood into crimson froth.

He silently looked Atherton over and then turned his gaze on Smithers.

"Well, I'll be d—"

He bethought himself of the fair listeners and smothered the impending profanity.

Returning his attention to the wounded man he remarked, dryly:

"Went lookin' fer it, didn't ye?"

He turned to Miss Weatherson:

"Have ye a fresh handkerchief about ye, ma'am? I wanter cork up the hole in this party's bellows—it's leakin'."

The young woman handed him a filmy, lace-bordered handkerchief, and he applied it to the wound in Atherton's chest, binding it on with his own neckerchief and pocket bandana.

"There," he said, grimly, "that'll hold enough o' yer black blood in yer derned carcass ter keep ye a-goin' till Doc. Jones can do a better job. I wanter save ye fer a terrible example."

Smithers left his Dulcinea, picked up his gun and came toward the sheriff, who met him half way.

"The bloomin' blighter!" exclaimed the Englishman, looking towards his prostrate quarry—then after a careful inspection of the .44 that he was gingerly carrying, he remarked, "Rippin' good idea that, Mr. Horton, shootin' from the hip—very!"

Horton slapped his pupil heartily on the back.

"Didn't I tell ye to call me 'Tom,' ye blood-thirsty man-eater?"

Parker joined them and affectionately grasped his partner by the hand.

"Smithers, my friend," he said, gratefully,

"you've made me rich and saved my life—all in one day. That's a pretty good score, old man, and I'll not forget it."

"An' don't forget the near-bull's-eye he just made. Pretty good for a tenderfoot, eh, Smithers?" joshed Horton.

The Englishman drew himself up with offended dignity and registered a protest which was rather emphatic—for him.

"Call me Ponsy, if you don't mind, Mr.—er, Tom. An' I'm not quite keen on that tenderfoot stuff, don'tcher know."

"Right you are, Ponsy, old sox! But put up yer blawsted gun—game's up," laughed the sheriff.

"My word," said Smithers, from sheer force of habit, it's so bloomin' hot it might bally well burn me trousers!—what?"

Then with sudden recollection the redoubtable gunman put his trusty .44 back in its holster, amid the affectionate smiles of everybody save the miserable victim of his expert marksmanship.

Thanks to a naturally good constitution and the wonderful, health-giving air of the hill country, Atherton speedily recovered from his wound. This despite the rough nursing provided by certain citizens of Deadwood, who magnanimously volunteered to aid the efforts of a young army surgeon who chanced to be stationed with his command in the Hills, and in whose hands the wounded man was fortunate enough to be placed—thereby escaping "Doc" Jones.

Horton watched the prisoner and the progress of the case very carefully and as soon as the surgeon in charge notified him that his patient could stand a stage ride, had a rather interesting interview with the convalescent, and another with some of the more tur-

bulent spirits of the town who had expressed an ardent desire to lynch the prisoner as soon as he was well enough to appreciate the finer points of the proposed ceremony. The sheriff's remarks in both instances were sufficiently convincing to enable him to carry his point. His end of the conversation, with Atherton especially, was very comprehensible and as brief as was consistent with clearness. As Horton himself expressed it, he "told the infernal scoundrel jest where he got off, took the freedom o' the city away from him an' told him ter pull his freight, *muy pronto.*"

Parker did not wish to have his would-be slayer punished further, and so, as a logical outcome of the interview, just three weeks after Deadwood's tacitly acknowledged militant wonder, Smithers, had used Atherton as a target and perforated his lung, the promoter slunk into an obscure corner of the morning stage, and departed from Deadwood, still sore in body and full of the gall and wormwood of defeat and the humiliation of knowing that he was hated and despised by everybody in town.

When he finally had shaken the dust of the Black Hills off his feet—which time-worn expression was in his case literal and descriptive rather than metaphoric—Atherton promised himself the most dire revenge upon his foes through the discomfiture of the person that he hated most of all, Bob Parker.

The bumping and shaking of the stiff-springed stage did not assuage Atherton's feelings, nor take the edge off his keen desire to get even, for the jar painfully reminded him that he still was on the list of the maimed and physically incapacitated.

When, half-dead, he had laboriously clambered upon the train at Bismarck, *en route* for the east, he vengefully shook his fist in the direction of the Black

Hills and rabidly vowed that he would one day settle his score in a manner that should be very discomforting to the enemies he had left behind.

That the disgruntled promoter's direful intentions were as sincere as his resentment was bitter, was destined to develop later, in a manner that should leave no room for doubt that he had done his best to even up matters with his enemies.

Parker and Smithers went steadily on with the development of their mine, the results proving that the enthusiasm with which the first specimens of ore from the mother lode were greeted was more than justified.

They put themselves in touch with certain financial interests in the east, and soon were faced with the necessity of deciding whether they would sell the mine outright, or incorporate it and, retaining a controlling interest, continue to work it in behalf of the company.

The latter plan especially appealed to the two partners because, for obvious reasons, they desired to remain in the Black Hills. It finally was decided that the matter of incorporation should be seriously taken up as soon as the work of development had proceeded far enough to show advantageously the alluring prospect to parties whom they might attempt to interest in the venture.

By mutual agreement Miss Weatherson and Parker saw little of each other, the latter still entertained the same pessimistic views regarding their relations that he had expressed to her at the schoolhouse on the afternoon when he and his arch-enemy, Atherton, told her his story. The young miner's aversion to any definite plans regarding their future was enhanced by the knowledge that, figuratively, he

was sitting upon a keg of powder which was likely to blow up at any minute.

Parker really felt that Gordon would do his best to disentangle the web in which fate had enmeshed him the day he had accepted the position on the railroad construction work at A . . . ., but he could not shake off the gloomy foreboding that the correspondent was destined to fail.

The young man wisely concluded that hard work was the only remedy for his moody impressions of the future, hence the town saw very little of him for some time. He barely kept in touch with his friends and admirers, and that was all. As for the impending campaign, it was sure to be satisfactory to him, whatever the outcome. He therefore ignored it altogether until a few days before the election, when he felt that he must show his friends, by doing some speaking, that he appreciated their interest in him.

Miss Weatherson went serenely on with her teaching, endearing herself more and more each day to her pupils and their parents. She, too, was an enthusiastic exponent of the gospel of work, but unlike the object of her affections, the horizon of her hopes was illumed with rose tints and the promise of golden hours of happiness throughout a long life of congenial companionship and mutual love. Believing implicitly in her lover's innocence and in the logic of events, the young woman really was happy in looking forward to the good things which, she felt sure, the fates were in duty bound eventually to bestow upon them.

It is thus that rosy optimism and serene—and alas! often misplaced—confidence in the final vindication of right and justice ever wait upon youth.

Supported by feminine intuition, backed by the faith inspired by inexperience with the world of hu-

man duplicity and self-interested machination, the young woman never for a moment doubted that Gordon would succeed in his mission in the east and, as the days rolled on, looked forward with increasing eagerness to his return.

Chapter XXX

AN ELECTION AND A LOST NUMBER

Election day finally arrived and dawned as clear and crisp as is the wont of well-behaved early November days in the Black Hills.

From the interest and excitement displayed by the citizens of Deadwood, one might have inferred that momentous issues were at stake, instead of an election in which the public was bound to be pleased, no matter which candidate was successful. But the population of the town was a decidedly sporty one, and Horton stated the truth when he stated that it wanted a fair betting proposition in politics as well as in everything else that could be construed as a game.

The two friends and rivals entered into the spirit of the thing and were on hand bright and early, making superfluous stump speeches to delighted audiences and thoroughly enjoying the amusing situation.

They followed each other around and alternated in their speeches between eulogizing the opposition candidate and "roasting" him good-naturedly as one whose election inevitably would ruin the country, cause the gold to ooze out of the hills and roll away into some seismic chasm, or precipitate an uprising of hostile Indians and the storming of the sheriff's office. At every telling point and bit of

repartee the crowd convulsed itself with glee or frantically applauded the speaker.

Horton wittily admitted his opponent's pulchritude, but offset this by laying particular stress on his obvious inexperience and the alleged fact that his feet were still tender, and of a pink color. He was sure of their color, for had he not seen them, many, many times?

Parker, on the other hand, called especial attention to Horton's decrepitude and consequent physical debility, a point which resulted in a challenge to a wrestling bout, to be pulled off after the election was over—each man disclaiming a desire to maim a perfectly good opposing candidate before the result had been announced. The young miner further asserted that his opponent's mental faculties surely must be failing, or he never would have entered a race in which he was sure to be beaten.

The crowd yelled itself hoarse at these sallies and fairly howled for more.

Save for a few bibulous enthusiasts who evidenced a desire to "shoot up" the town, which desire was speedily repressed by the deputies whom the sheriff had appointed for the day, the election was devoid of unpleasantness and as interesting and amusing a farce as American politics ever produced—which is much to say, for farce-comedy is the dominant characteristic of politics in our beloved country.

Nearly everybody had knocked off work for the day and as the male population was not large enough to congest the single polling booth at the postoffice, the balloting practically was over long before noon.

The majority of the men voted bright and early in the morning and then proceeded to make a holiday

of it, which consisted in loafing about in what was by common consent the "public square," and making frequent excursions into the neighboring saloons, McGinnis's bar getting, as usual, the lion's share of the patronage.

The public square was merely the space at the intersection of the main street of the town with a smaller street.

On the corner stood the Miners' Rest, with its alluring invitation to all and sundry to partake of the solid comforts and liquid refreshments within, emblazoned across its front in enormous letters in black and white, evidently done by a 'prentice hand, who made up in enthusiasm and liberality in the use of his colors what he obviously lacked in artistic technic and accuracy of detail.

Flanking the hotel on one side was a large general store and a butcher's shop.

On the opposite corner of the intersecting street was a drug store, the proprietor of which practiced "medicine and surgery" when he was not selling pain-killers, spavin cures, kidney-plasters, quinine, bandages, paint or putty.

Opposite the hotel was the postoffice, and adjoining the latter the office of that inevitable and useful factor of pioneer civilization in America, the Wells-Fargo Express Company. The stage and express offices were one.

In front of the postoffice was a great wooden horse-trough, the use of which was divided between thirsty equines and certain waggish individuals who were wont to add to the gayety of nations by sousing in it such "bums" as were not especially noted for skill in gunnery or knife play.

On several occasions this form of pleasantry had been attended by unfortunate mistakes in the selection of bums, which errors of judgment had added little to the reputation and safety of the water-cure, but had done much to establish the surgical fame of old "Doc." Jones, the proprietor of the corner drug store across the way.

Adjoining the express office was a hardware store, which ran the saloons a close second in popularity. Guns, big and little, ammunition of all kinds, knives for belt and pocket, and belts and holsters vied with picks, shovels and blasting powder in attracting the attention of the citizens and bidding for patronage.

Horses in abundance and variety, among which were numerous specimens of that distinctive variety of quadruped known as the "cow pony," constantly were to be seen tethered in front of the express and post-offices. The neighing and stamping of these animals was intermingled with the raucous, plaintive song of that indispensable aid to the mountaineer, euphoniously yclept the "Rocky Mountain Canary," the burro. A herd of these humble little burden-bearers nearly always was to be seen in the public square, patiently awaiting the enormous loads of supplies with which they were destined to be loaded on the return trip to the mines, or to the towns further up in the Hills.

The crowd in the square on the day of the election was large and motley and the assortment of animals tethered all up and down the street was correspondingly numerous and varied.

Slinking about among the horses or whining and smelling at the heels of the men, was a number of mangy-looking curs, with an occasional dog of nobler

lineage, who endeavored to exhibit a dignity which was with difficulty preserved amid the yelps and snappings of his humbler brethren.

The men who stood about in groups or leisurely strolled in and out of the various public houses, were of all sorts and conditions. The majority of the crowd was composed of miners, but there was a sprinkling of cow-boys and a few well-dressed men who evidently were of the class that preys upon the man who earns his bread by the "sweat of his pick," defrauding him by the "short card" or the "promotion" method.

A party of gaily-bedecked Indians added color and picturesqueness to the scene. They phlegmatically stood aloof and with expressionless curiosity surveyed the crowd, talking but little in their odd gutterals and expressing their feelings by an occasional grunt.

The rival candidates continued their speech-making until dinner-time. Horton had been orating from an upturned whisky barrel in front of the post-office. His political opponent was haranguing a crowd of his own from the steps of the Miners' Rest on the other side of the street.

In the midst of the speeches, Sam appeared at the door of the hotel and hammered noisily on a huge gong.

"Hello, Tom! The race problem is too much for me!" cried Parker at his rival across the square. "I can't talk against Sam and that gong, so let's call it a draw!"

"Ah—ha! You quitter, you!" Horton shouted back at him. "You're hungry, that's what ails you!"

"Very well, I'll admit it, so let it go at that, but let's call it off."

"Want ter take another fall out o' me after dinner, Bob?"

"No, you can have the rest of the votes."

"Hear that, boys?" yelled the sheriff. "Bob's resigned in my favor!"

The crowd howled itself hoarse and somebody yelled:

"All right, Sheriff, we'll see you later. Be sure and be on hand for the returns."

"Five o'clock, boys," Parker called out, "and don't let Tom get at that ballot box."

"Never fear, you fellers!" Horton countered; "I'll bet Bob'll have it in the hotel safe inside o' twenty minutes!"

The people laughed good-naturedly and dispersed, after vociferously and impartially cheering both candidates.

A good-sized crowd had gathered and the square was pretty well filled, long before the hour appointed for announcing the results of the election, and by five o'clock practically the entire town was on hand to receive the returns.

The women turned out in force to hear proclaimed the winner of the unique contest. Both candidates were popular with them, for the incumbent of the office of Sheriff had proved a most capable and sensible official, and his rival, although a comparatively recent addition to the social atmosphere of Deadwood, had won the friendship and esteem of everybody in the place. Frontier towns are quick accurately to estimate the worth of new-comers and classify them, and where the town and country themselves are new, the "Oldest Inhabitant" fad is not

a prominent feature of either the social or the political life.

It would be difficult to explain why the parties who controlled the machinery of the election delayed the returns until so late in the afternoon. The local offices—of which that of Sheriff was considered the most important, and certainly was the only one which had excited any interest—were few and the voting population comparatively scanty. Possibly the political powers in the crude little mining town desired to impress the public with their own importance and the solemnity due the occasion. Perhaps, on the other hand, the parties aforesaid were merely lazy.

While the crowd was good-humoredly awaiting the returns, quite a number of the men occupied their time in placing bets on their favorite candidate. Betting was spirited and ran high. The frontiersman rarely is a "piker" when it comes to a betting proposition.

So interested was everybody in the betting and the quips and sallies of those participating, that the stage rolled in and discharged its passengers without attracting especial attention, although there was a larger influx of strangers than usual.

A little after five o'clock the election "commission," composed of Dixie and two of his fellow miners, made its report amid a volley of enthusiastic comments and gibes from the crowd.

Dixie climbed to the top of the whisky barrel from which Horton had been speaking and in stentorian accents proclaimed the result of the election.

The announcement that Bob Parker had won by a small majority was received with such wild enthusiasm that the onlooker who was not familiar with the

situation never for a moment would have suspected that there had been a political contest, but would have concluded that the crowd had gathered merely for the purpose of celebrating some important and unanimously popular event.

Everybody was especially pleased by the narrowness of the margin by which the successful candidate won. The nearness to a tie vote soothed the feelings of those who had lost their bets, merely by vindicating their judgment in selecting a candidate who almost came under the wire ahead of the other fellow.

The crowd yelled and cheered until its collective throat was almost split—and quite dry—much to the edification of the purveyors of liquids in that vicinity, and especially to the satisfaction of Mr. McGinnis, whose business was more prosperous than ever that afternoon.

The only persons in sight who were oblivious to the prevailing enthusiasm were Smithers and Ellen, who were sitting on the hotel veranda engaged in earnest conversation to which the lively and vivacious little Irish lass was the chief and at times sole contributor, the Englishman looking his adoration in lieu of speaking, thereby saving his protoplasmic poise.

Having cast his vote for his partner—keenly regretting that he could not vote for both candidates—Smithers' lackadaisical interest in Black Hills politics temporarily had subsided, his attention reverting to the only thing that interested him when he was off duty at the mine—his love affair.

Dixie was about to jump down from his improvised pedestal, when Parker came in sight down the cross street.

"There comes the new sheriff, boys!" cried the miner; "Let's cut loose and give him the grand razoo!"

As the winner of the election swung into full view, the crowd surely did "cut loose" with a will and greeted him with wild whoops and cheers.

Smithers woke up from his blissful trance and ambled to the edge of the veranda, followed by Ellen.

"Rawther slow, Dixie, old chap, don'tcher know," he complained. Let's give him a ripper!—what?"

"You bet!" replied the miner. "Once more, boys! Three cheers fer Bob Parker, an' don't save yer blasted lungs!"

The cheers were given with a will.

"Tiger!" yelled Dixie.

The tiger was forthcoming and fairly shook the rickety buildings surrounding the square.

Smithers evidently was satisfied with the results for he complacently remarked:

"Most extraor'nary, that tiger! Very."

The women in the crowd and several other females whose heads were popping out of neighboring windows added their quota to the general uproar by clapping their hands. Ellen frantically waved her handkerchief at the newly-elected official.

McGinnis and his dusky helper, Sam, came to the door and joined in the din. Sam howled like a fiend, grinning until the top of his head looked like a black, woolly dome floating on a sea of ivory, whilst his boss took a hand in directing the celebration.

Coming to the front of the veranda, the Irishman shouted:

"Pfwat's the matter wid Misther Parker?"

The crowd having variously and with emphasis assured McGinnis that Bob was "all right," "A

1," a "solid Muldoon" and "No. 1, first chop," the hero of the occasion modestly came forward and smilingly acknowledged the ovation.

"Thank you, boys."

Amid numerous loud cries of "Speech! Speech! Parker! Speech!" the sheriff-elect passed through his noisy admirers and ascended the hotel steps.

"My friends," he said, feelingly, "I didn't expect this warm reception. If I had,"—he turned to the Englishman—"I should have asked my partner here, Mr. Smithers, to prepare a speech for me. He says he writes better English than I do, and you all will admit that he talks it!"

Everybody laughed and applauded this sally, which Smithers accepted with due modesty, as became a recipient of a compliment that he himself believed to be deserved.

"And, by the way, boys," Parker continued, laying his hand on his partner's shoulder, "if he hadn't been as successful in handling a gun as he is in developing prospects, today's contest for the office of Sheriff would have been a one-sided affair."

Smithers was cheered to the echo.

"I am not sure," laughed the speaker, "that he would not have made a better sheriff than either Tom Horton or myself."

The crowd roared at this and gave another rousing cheer.

"But, after all," said Parker, seriously, "preparation is not necessary for the expression of sentiments that come straight from the heart. I came among you a few short months ago, a total stranger, with pink toes and tender soles—as my friend Horton would say—and you people of the great west took me to your hearts and gave me your confidence. Today you have elected me to the most important

and responsible office within your jurisdiction. This is a proud moment for me, boys, for not only have you done me honor and shown the confidence you repose in one who is almost a stranger to you, but you have displaced a far better man to make room for me—"

Here the crowd interrupted with cheers of "No!" "No!"

The speaker smiled and went on.

"Oh, yes you have. There's only one Tom Horton, and you know it, mighty well, and if he hadn't plugged for me on the quiet instead of taking care of his own fences, he'd have licked me, hands down. But, my friends, I'm going to try to make good, and with Tom to advise me, I hope to succeed."

Parker looked towards the postoffice and saw his friend Horton in the rear of the throng, peering over the heads of the listeners and deprecatingly shaking his head at the speaker's complimentary allusions to himself.

"Hello!" shouted Parker, "there's Tom, now! Three cheers for Tom Horton! Now, altogether—whoop 'er up, boys!"

The salvo of cheers and a tiger were given with cordial good will and several men grabbed Horton and dragged him, red and protesting, to a place beside the sheriff-elect.

There was a loud clamor for another speech.

"Lookee here, boys," stammered the embarrassed sheriff, "I ain't no speech-maker, an' I'm goin' ter be just a plain citizen from now on. I've appointed Bob ter do my speakin' fer me, an' 'Ponsy' here, has agreed ter do my shootin' fer me, so ye'll excuse me if I take a back seat."

The crowd laughed and applauded and he turned to his friend and heartily grasped him by the hand.

"Bob, old man, I'm glad ye licked me. I congratulate ye an' wish ye success."

"Thank you, Tom," returned Parker, deeply moved. "With your help I hope to win success."

The assembled citizens went fairly wild over this demonstration of mutual regard by their two popular idols and made such a racket that Mrs. McGinnis, who until then had been steadfastly attending to her household duties during the noisy celebration, could no longer stand the uproar and rushed to the door, broom in hand.

She glared angrily at the crowd for a moment and then ferociously brandished her broom at everybody and everything in general.

"Pfwat are ye noisy divils up ter now, hey. Yez do be actin' loike a lot o' crazy lunatics! Clear out o' this!" and she advanced to the top of the steps with eyes flashing and her broom uplifted in a manner that promised a headache to anybody who received its impact.

"Clear out o' this, I say, ye shpalpeens!" reiterated the angry Amazon, "or Oi'll be afther wallopin' the hull gang o' yez!"

The crowd quieted down and everybody wore an expectant grin, waiting to see who would be the first unlucky victim of the militant Irish woman's onslaught.

Horton interposed as peace-maker *ex-officio* and approached the irate woman with his most ingratiating smile and smoothest manner.

Dixie, who was watching the performance with keen enjoyment, gleefully poked his nearest companion in the ribs.

"Watch Tom get his," he whispered.

Tom got "his" and quickly. Mrs. McGinnis lowered her broom and witheringly surveyed him.

"An' you too, Tom Horton, bad cess ter yez! Ye're the worst o' the lot—an' may the divil fly away wid yez!"

McGinnis laughed behind his hands. Sam opened his immense mouth and was about to join in his boss's merriment, but caught his mistress's eye and thinking better of it, discreetly shut up like a clam and stood rolling his eyes until they appeared to be all whites.

"But you see, Mrs. McGinnis," soothed Horton, "we was cheerin' Bob Parker; he's been elected Sheriff."

"An' he bate yez! He bate yez!" she crowed. "Glory be to God! Is it thrue?"

Horton chuckled good-naturedly at the obvious slam at his official prestige and popularity.

"Yes, ma'am," he replied, meekly, "it's sure some true."

The good woman triumphantly waved her broom in the air, narrowly missing Sam's flat nose.

"Hooray! Hooray for Misther Parker! God bless him!" she shouted.

The crowd responded ear-splittingly and wound up with three cheers and a tiger for the lady herself, much to her embarrassment.

"Ah! g'long wid yer blarney, now, ye palaverin' divils!" she expostulated, retreating in blushing confusion into the hotel.

McGinnis and Sam followed her, wisely concluding that there soon would be a rush of business to attend to, while Smithers and Ellen returned to their love-making at the end of the veranda.

The crowd dispersed, a number entering the bar-room of the hotel in search of refreshment. A group of a dozen or so, of whom Dixie was one, remained in front of the postoffice talking over the election.

The sheriff and his successful rival sat down for a chat on the hotel steps.

"Say, Bob," grinned Horton, flirting his thumb in the direction of the Englishman and his sweetheart, "how's things comin' on with England and the home-rule party?"

"Beautifully, Tom—Mrs. McGinnis snuggled up to the mother lode like a sick kitten to a hot brick, and when she heard how Smithers sniped Atherton—"

"Just nothin' to it, eh, Bob?"

"I should say not. Why, the next time McGinnis got gay, she told him she wished he'd brace up and be a man—'loike Mr. Smithers.'"

"So, the course o' true love's a runnin' smooth now. When does the kid start east to the 'varnishin'' school?"

"Humph!" chuckled Parker; "ma has changed her mind about that. Ellen is not going."

"Ah! I see, afraid she'll lose him, eh?" chuckled the sheriff, comprehendingly.

"Yes," assented the other, adding dryly ,"or the mother lode."

The two men were quietly laughing at the amusing situation afforded by the Englishman's love affair, when Miss Weatherson, evidently in a state of considerable agitation, appeared in the square and hurried towards them.

They simultaneously saw the young woman and, springing to their feet, hastened to meet her.

"Oh, Robert!—Mr. Horton!" she gasped, breathlessly, "I'm so glad I've found you! Something dreadful has happened!"

"What is the trouble? What's up?" they chorused.

"There's a detective from the east at the Prospect

House, and he's inquiring after you, Mr. Parker!" she replied, panic-stricken.

His face paled and he swayed a little.

"A detective looking for me, Miss Weatherson! How do you know?"

Her eyes suffused with tears, and she was the picture of despair.

"He came in on the afternoon stage and got to drinking with Jeff Peters. He became talkative and told Jeff that he was an officer of the law from New York and had a warrant for your arrest. Jeff's little boy heard it, and meeting me a few moments later, innocently told me about it!"

Parker took a deep breath and calmly faced Horton.

"Well, Tom," he said, steadily; "it has come at last."

Horton violently clenched his fists and swore great oaths under his breath. He was not pleasant to look at just then, and if a New York detective or two had confronted him at that particular moment, something serious quite likely would have happened.

"So, Atherton has beaten us to it!" he ejaculated, savagely. "The next fool tenderfoot I teach ter shoot, 'll learn exactly where the bull's-eye is, ye can bet on that! But it's my own fault; instead o' givin' that cussed sneak the twenty-four hour limit ter git out o' town, I'd oughter taken a crack at him myself."

Miss Weatherson clasped her hands in great distress, and with tears rolling down her cheeks looked appealingly at the two friends.

"Oh! What *can* we do?" she implored. "Mr. Gordon will succeed—I'm sure he will! He *must* succeed! Can't that detective be induced to leave Mr. Parker alone until Gordon returns?"

"That's dead easy, Miss Weatherson," replied Horton, with a fierce scowl and significantly touching his pistol butt. "I think he can be induced ter let him alone at least that long—an' p'raps longer. Don't worry, little woman, this aggregation o' talent is goin' ter stand pat. Whether that newspaper feller makes good or not, they'll have one sweet time gettin' Bob Parker. It'll take the whole Noo York police force an 'a company o' regulars—an' they'll have to whip the whole town o' Deadwood, at that. Get—our—new—sheriff? Sufferin cats! I should say not!"

His eye fell upon Dixie, who was talking with a group of men a little distance away, and he called to him.

"I say, Dixie!"

"What's doin', Tom," responded the miner, joining the party and, noting their agitation, curiously eyeing its members.

"There's a feller down at the Prospect House—came in this afternoon—that say's he's a detective—say's he's got a warrant fer Bob Parker for gettin' a feller down in Noo York an' breakin' jail!"

Dixie snorted derisively.

"So Bob got a feller, did he?" he commented, sarcastically. "How awful! He'd oughter be slapped on the wrist!"

"Bob says it's a lie," Horton went on. "Is that detective goin' ter get him?"

Dixie mounted the whiskey barrel and addressed the gathering of men in the square, which now was rapidly being augmented by others from the hotel who had been attracted by the commotion.

"Friends an' feller citizens," orated Dixie, "there's a 'spicious character come inter town on the

stage this afternoon that says he's a detective from Noo York."

"What's his lay?" demanded one of the crowd.

"He says he's got a warrant fer Bob Parker!"

"The h——l he has!" blustered another, indignantly. "What fer?"

Dixie's lip curled with contempt as he sarcastically answered:

"He's claimin' that Bob got some tenderfoot or other down in Noo York, an' broke jail."

The townspeople howled in derision.

"He's slanderin' one of our most re-spected and be-loved citizens!" continued Dixie, "an' I asks you fellers as between man an' man, are we a-goin' ter stand fer it?"

"Where is he?" demanded several angry voices. "Where is the durned skunk?"

"Down ter the Prospect House," replied Dixie.

A number of the men started down the street towards the hostelry mentioned, with curses and imprecations that promised direful happenings to the luckless object of their wrath if they ever succeeded in rounding him up.

"Hold on, boys!" commanded Dixie.

The angry miners paused and gave attention.

"Let's do the thing reg'lar," Dixie went on. "I move that we put the d——d lunatic in the calaboose over night, an' give him a friendly invite ter beat it outer town in the mornin'?"

"Sure—that shpalpeen's dangerous ter the community!" interjected McGinnis from the doorway, where he had been an interested listener to the miner's harangue.

"Ye've heard the motion, gents," said Dixie. "All you fellers that b'lieves in keepin' bad elements outer this town say 'Aye!' "

Amid a volley of explosive "Ayes," the chairman *pro tem* descended from his improvised rostrum and, without waiting to call for the "Nays" or to declare the motion carried, led the party of belligerents on their mission of regulation of the manners of the impertinent and slanderous stranger.

"Go to it, boys!" Horton yelled after them. "I appoint ye my deputy, Dixie. Mind ye, now, no gun play! Handle him legally."

"Sure, Tom," growled Dixie, with a malicious chuckle, "an' then some!"

A glint of fire in the sheriff's eyes betrayed his deep satisfaction as he thought of the sort of handling the offender was likely to receive.

McGinnis and Sam returned to the bar-room, chuckling with pleasure as they pictured to themselves what they were sure was going to happen to the fellow who had had the temerity to traduce Bob Parker.

Ellen and her adorer, Smithers, still were billing and cooing at the end of the veranda, so deeply absorbed in each other that they were blissfully unconscious of what was occurring.

As Dixie and his volunteer posse disappeared, Horton with grim satisfaction turned to Parker, who, stunned by the suddenness with which his sky had become overcast, had been apathetically observing the militant actions of his friends.

"There," he snapped, "I reckon that'll hold yer Noo York friend fer a while. What's goin' ter happen ter him 'll be a plenty. It'll probably be my last official or unofficial act as Sheriff, Bob, but I'm goin' ter go out in a blaze o' glory—an 'the blaze'll be plenty hot enough fer that damned detective, ye can jest bet yer last ounce on that!"

Parker shook himself together.

"What's the use, Tom?" he protested, earnestly. "The game's not worth the candle. I'd better make my get-away while I have the chance."

"Think so? Well, ye ain't got no chance. If ye try ter get away ternight I'll stop ye, mighty quick, fer I'm still Sheriff o' this town until ye're installed termorrow. If ye try it on after ye take the oath o' office, I'll have ye impeached, an' imprisoned, an' impounded fer malfeezance in office. D'ye hear?"

"Tom, you are incorrigible," sighed Parker, smiling affectionately.

"Reckon I must be, seein' as how the word means somethin' tough," retorted the sheriff, "but you'll stay in Deadwood just the same."

Miss Weatherson had been anxiously listening to what had been said, and mentally had cheered Dixie and his band when they had started after their prospective victim. As she gazed after the regulators of Deadwood's moral atmosphere there was a lambent glow in the depths of her eyes which suggested that there was in her bosom not a little of the spirit bequeathed to her by certain of her militant ancestors, and that she too was not quite in sympathy with the man from New York.

As the self-constituted posse disappeared, the young woman gratefully turned to the sheriff.

"Mr. Horton," she exclaimed, fervently, "you're the greatest man I ever knew!—excepting one," she added tenderly, surreptitiously glancing at Parker.

"Speakin' o' your father, o' course," rejoined Horton, soberly, but with twinkling eyes.

The young woman was rosy with embarrassment.

"How can I—how can we—ever repay you," she asked, in charming confusion.

"Better wait 'till the job's done," he laughed,

adding slyly in a whisper in his friend Bob's ear; "Ye can name the first boy after his uncle Tom."

"Don't crowd the mourners, old man," was the smilingly whispered reply.

"Hello!" exclaimed Parker, "Here's Dixie coming back. Say, Tom, it looks to me as if that detective had sobered up!"

"Holy smoke! Will ye look at that?" cried the astonished sheriff, sizing up the approaching deputy-sheriff, *ex-officio,* "What the deuce has happened to him?"

Dixie, with his nose bleeding, one eye blackened and his clothes torn and covered with dirt, slowly limped through the crowd of wondering men who still were standing about, and was greeted by the sheriff, who was having his own troubles in smothering a laugh.

"Well, Dixie, did ye get him?"

For a returning conqueror, the chief regulator presented a ludicrous picture as he wiped the sweat and dirt from his face and cleared the blood from his nose by several violent blasts into a huge red bandana handkerchief.

"Sure!" he snorted, triumphantly, with another noisy application of the handkerchief to his nose. "We got the son-of-a-gun all right, an' he's on his way ter jail now, but it took six of us ter do it. I'm mighty glad there was only one o' him. An' he never even tried ter pull a gun! What d'ye think o' that?"

"Member o' your foot-ball team, Bob, I'll bet a hat!" muttered Horton, in a chaffing aside to his friend.

"He'll cool down in jail all right," said the sheriff, consolingly, to Dixie.

"Yes," retorted the miner lugubriously, rubbing

his tender nose, "but if he don't tear that shaky old calaboose down an' vamoose the ranch by mornin', I'll miss my guess."

"All right, Dixie, we'll build another—an' run him down an' put him in it, jest ter christen the new one."

"But you'll appint some other feller on the deputy job, unless ye give me leave ter bend a gun on his nut," grumbled Dixie.

"Very well, then, I'll send Smithers after him," the sheriff satirically chuckled in an ostentatiously loud tone.

Smithers heard his name mentioned and emerged from the bliss in which he was wallowing.

"Beg pawdon, Mr.—er, Tom, were you addressin' me?"

"No, but I was speakin' o' you," replied Horton, gravely. "I said I was thinkin' o' appointin' you my deputy an' sendin' ye after a desperate character that's hangin' 'round town."

"Thanks, awfully, old chap! I'll do me duty, don'tcher know!"

After this martial declaration, the Englishman resumed the less strenuous and more agreeable occupation of making dignified love to Ellen.

"Lookee here, Tom!" cried Dixie, earnestly, solicitously feeling of his swollen eye, "if that feller 'll apologize fer slanderin' Bob Parker, don't let him git away! We'll elect him mayor the next time; he could run this little old settlement, hands down, an' make it look like a Sunday school! He—" His glance wandered up the cross-street and he stopped short, his face expressing the most profound astonishment and consternation.

"Well, I'll be d——blowed!" he gasped, helplessly, his jaw slackening and his whole attitude sug-

gesting that of one who is thoroughly beaten and completely discomfited.

Everybody looked in the direction of Dixie's glance and saw a stranger coming toward the square.

An instant later a stockily-built, determined-looking man of middle-age strode across the intervening space and aggressively elbowing his way through the crowd approached Horton and Parker.

The stranger showed plain evidences of a recent rough-and-tumble dispute. His clothing was torn and soiled, his collar flapping loose at both ends and his necktie shifted around under one ear. His derby hat was dusty and badly dented and he was red and perspiring as to face, but his wind was still good and, aside from his disordered raiment, he had not the slightest mark upon him to suggest that he had been man-handled.

The onlookers stared at him with mingled curiosity and amazement.

He addressed himself to the sheriff.

"I'm looking for a man who calls himself Robert Parker," he announced, brusquely.

Parker instinctively started to step forward, but he was stopped by Horton, who interposed his arm, pushed him back and stepped directly in front of him.

"The foot-ball man has sobered up, all right!" whispered the sheriff, hoarsely, as he passed his friend.

"Who are you, an' what d'ye want o' Parker?" Horton sternly demanded, his brow lowering and his face darkening ominously.

"My name's Williams. I'm an officer from Central, New York City," the stranger abruptly replied, opening his coat and displaying his badge.

I have a warrant for the arrest of one Robert Parkyn, alias Robert Parker."

"Ye have, eh?" sneered Horton, "I reckon ye'll have ter find him first."

"Sure—that's what I'm here for," replied the detective, not in the least abashed. "I understand he's here, somewhere. If he isn't here, I'll look elsewhere, but I'm going to find him."

Just as the determined man concluded this statement, Dixie's posse of regulators rushed into the square and reported to the sheriff.

"That feller got away, Tom!" exclaimed the leader of the party. "We tried ter—"

The speaker and his companions caught sight of Williams and were stricken dumb with amazement.

"Yes, I know all about it," said Horton, sneering sarcastically. "We've got him—I don't guess."

Reverting to the detective he queried, coolly:

"When ye find Parker, what are ye goin' ter do with him?"

Miss Weatherson, visibly agitated, anxiously leaned forward to hear the detective's answer.

"I'm going to take him back to Sing Sing, to finish a twenty-year term for murder," was the calm reply.

Horton's hand dropped to his holster, where it carelessly rested on the butt of his .44. The men standing around, belligerently began to close in and, following the sheriff's example, put their hands to their weapons.

"Noo York warrants don't go here. S'pose we don't let ye take him, what then?" pursued Horton, fondling his pistol butt.

Williams understood and paled a little, but unflinchingly faced the grim and menacing looks of the rough-looking men who surrounded him.

"I'll get him all right—if I live," he answered, slowly and without a tremor. "If I don't, there's plenty more like me where I came from, and a few dead men more or less don't count for much in the records of the New York police department."

Horton stepped menacingly toward the detective and the crowd murmured threateningly, pressing in until the officer scarcely had elbow room.

He gave a couple of shoves with his massive shoulders, followed by a vigorous push or two with his strong hands and cleared a space around him.

Horton stopped short but made no move to draw his weapon. The other hostiles, mutely astonished at the stranger's temerity in thus bucking the line, remained where he had pushed them.

The detective looked them over defiantly, individually and collectively, for a brief space and then wrathfully exploded:

"You're a bunch of dead-game sports—I don't think! So this is your western idea of fairness, eh?" he sneered. "One lone man—a stranger—is only trying to do his duty, and a gang of you fellows jump on him and try to lock him up! And now you're ready to turn a battery of artillery loose on him—God! but you're a bunch of dunghills! Drop your guns and I'll lick any three of you!"

His grey eyes snapped angrily as he pulled off his coat, with apparent willingness to make good or die trying—an act of bravery which was not entirely lost on the angry men who surrounded him, as was evidenced by sundry gleams of admiration in the eyes of some of them.

Swayed by a sudden uncontrollable impulse, Parker forced his way past the sheriff into the center of the group, gently detaching the solicitously restraining hand that Miss Weatherson laid upon his

arm. As he passed Horton the young miner said quietly in his friend's ear:

"He's right, Tom, and nobody knows it better than you do."

He calmly faced the officer.

"Mr. Williams," he said, with superb coolness, "*I* am Robert Parkyn."

The detective in a business-like way laid his hand on Parker's shoulder.

"You are my prisoner, sir."

Horton made a move as if to interfere, and several of the more excitable among the crowd drew their guns, but Parker waved them aside with firm decision.

"None of that, boys!" he commanded, we're *not* dunghills, and this man is a thoroughbred—every inch of him!"

"I'm mighty sorry, sir," began Williams, "but—"

"I understand; it's your plain duty," gloomily interrupted the prisoner.

"Then I'll not need these, sir," smiled the officer, evidently greatly relieved, as he displayed a pair of handcuffs.

"No, you'll not need those ornaments, but I will surrender only on one condition."

"Condition!" bridled the detective, with an obstinate glint in his eye and a quick return of his *brusquerie*. "What condition? I'm not used to making treaties with parties that I do business with."

Just at this moment a dust-covered horseman rode quietly into the square, dismounted and hitched his jaded, foam-flecked mount in front of the express office. Miss Weatherson from the hotel steps caught a glimpse of the new-comer and almost screamed with joy. It was Dick Gordon!

The newspaper man caught the young woman's eye, and with finger on lip cautioned her not to betray him. He then quietly slipped up to the rear of the gathering, every man of which was too preoccupied with the exciting current events to notice his arrival.

"Then, Mr. Williams, I'll have to ask you to make an exception in this case," Parker went on, courteously, but insistently. "It is absolutely imperative that I remain in Deadwood thirty days longer."

"Thirty days!" cried the officer; "not on your life! I'll—"

"The sheriff will be responsible for me," the young man interposed.

"Where is the sheriff?" demanded Williams, obdurately, glaring defiance at the men who surrounded him.

"I'm the sheriff," responded Parker, quietly.

"What! You?—You're the sheriff?" gasped the astonished officer.

"Yes—or at least, I will be, after tomorrow."

"You're up against it, Mister Noo York sleuth!" exclaimed Horton, with a satisfied smirk.

Gordon elbowed his way to the front and impudently grinned in the detective's face.

"You sure *are* up against it, Williams," chuckled the reporter, gleefully.

"Dick Gordon!" cried the detective, in amazed recognition.

"Yes, Dick Gordon," echoed the young fellow, "and butting into police business, as usual. Sorry to have to interfere with your lay, Williams, old boy, but you'll have to drop your quarry."

Miss Weatherson came down the steps and pressing to her lover's side anxiously awaited further developments. She was followed by Smithers and Ellen, who finally had awakened to a consciousness

of the stirring events that were occurring and emerged from their Eden.

Gordon, with happiness radiating from every youthful feature, grasped the overjoyed Parker by the hand and pumped it like mad.

"You needn't set a time limit, Mr. Parkyn! Stay right on the job!"

"You have good news?" tremuously interjected Miss Weatherson.

"Yes, the best of news."

Parker grasped the correspondent by one shoulder and Horton by the other, almost breaking him in two in their anxiety.

"Is everything all right, Gordon?" they asked in chorus.

"Sure—and I'm here with the goods," he rattled, gayly. "I found Pete Johnson and Butch Harris. Butch is dying of consumption in Charity Hospital—on the Island. Stubby had been 'pulled' out of the pen about a month before and was back in New York. Boss Hennessy had double-crossed him in some job or other and the Bowery boy was sore as a boil. When I told him that Butch was dying, he came across and told me everything he knew, and then went with me to see Butch. Stubby induced the dying thug to confess and he owned up to killing the Italian during that fight—with a shot intended for Parkyn. Butch stated that his own gun was a .32 and that Bull Hennessy had jobbed the doctor who cut the ball out of the dead man. The Boss having got possession of the .32 ball, substituted for it the .38 that the doctor showed at the trial. Stubby and I looked up the county physician of H . . . County, and squeezed him like a lemon, getting a written statement of how Hennessy bilked him into giving up the ball and handed him the .38 just before he

went on the stand to testify. The poor devil of a doctor said that he was half full of bug-juice and so frightened during the trial that he couldn't have exposed the fraud if he had tried."

"What about Hennessy?" Parker broke in, with eager and hostile interest.

"I faced him with the evidence, but he was game and told me to go to hell. I didn't want to do that," chuckled Gordon, "so I wrote up a story for the Herald and drove the Boss out of town—which, in his case, means off the map.

"Incidentally," he went on, laughing happily, "the old man forgave me, thanked me for the scoop and sent me back to Deadwood with his blessing—and his compliments to the future bride and groom."

The reporter gallantly bowed low to Miss Weatherson.

The young woman blushed most becomingly and her lover gave her a tender smile of understanding.

"But what about that blamed skunk, Atherton?" demanded Horton, vindictively.

Gordon laughed explosively at the amusing reminiscence.

"Oh, I sicked his wife onto him—and that put *him* out of the running."

"What a damnable mess was made out of my case!" exclaimed Parker, resentfully.

"Yes, a hell's brew, for sure!" assented the correspondent. "That lawyer of yours was a blithering ass and the enemy was cunning. But you ought to have seen that rural State's Attorney's expression when I told him the story and asked to see Parkyn's revolver. Being a good one, he, of course, had kept it. I produced Butch Harris' gun, which, even when the poor devil knew he had not long to live, the thug had preserved with the proverbial affection of the

professional gun-man for the weapon that had stood his friend in need. When I laid the two guns side by side on the lawyer's desk and read Butch's confession to him—to which, by the way, the dying man had made affidavit—that public prosecutor looked sick, probably because he regretted that his innocent victim wouldn't have to serve out the rest of that twenty years in the pen."

"Well, the rest was easy," said Gordon, in conclusion. "I laid the facts before the governor—and here's his answer. No. 515 has lost his number, Mr. Parkyn."

He took an official-looking document from his pocket and handed it to Parkyn.

The young miner opened the paper and glanced at it eagerly.

"A pardon! Thank God!" he cried, with a surge of emotion that swept him almost completely off his feet.

Miss Weatherson threw herself into his waiting arms. He clasped his loved one close to his breast and murmured, softly:

"You've lost your jail-bird, dear, and, if it is not too late—"

She raised her face to his, and with a countenance radiant with joy and tears of happiness flooding her eyes, she smiled up at him tenderly as she whispered:

"Sweetheart, it's not too late and," she added, archly, "I still have my 'Trusty'."

The crowd went wild and whooped like a lot of crazy Indians. Inspired by the emotionally surcharged atmosphere, even Smithers woke up, grasping Ellen around the waist and holding her as if he were afraid someone might despoil him of his prize.

"My word!" he exclaimed, kissing her with a re-

sounding smack, "most extraor'nary, really! Marvellously clevah chap, that Gordon—very!"

Gordon took a paper from his pocket.

"Here's something for you, Mr. Horton," he shouted, above the din made by the crowd.

"What is it, a newspaper?" asked the sheriff, surveying it curiously.

"Yes, it's *my* pardon, I hope," smiled the correspondent. "It's the 'only genuine expurgated edition of the New York Herald.' "

Horton chuckled reminiscently and took the paper. As he unfolded it and noted the pictures and glaring headlines of the leading article, Gordon said, slyly:

"I hope you'll like the picture of your friend, Parkyn, alias Parker, better than the one you confiscated. Personally, I rather like Butch Harris' and Boss Hennessy's mugs, too. They add a lot to the story.

"By the way, Mr. Parkyn," he called to the happy young miner, "your old pal, Stubby, sent you his best regards and said he was glad that he changed his mind about helping you to clear yourself. He said, also, that if ever you came to New York you must be sure to look him up. Williams and I will find him for you, we're the greatest man-finders ever," and he grinned derisively at the detective.

"Rub it in, Dick, I can stand it. Things look good to me," the detective laughed back, appreciatively.

The crowd caught this remark and gave the officer a hearty round of applause.

Mrs. McGinnis came to the door, broom in hand, and surveyed the noisy scene. She took in the two couples of lovers, endeavored to speak, and ignominiously failing to find words to express her emotions, with a gesture of despair rushed wildly back into the

hotel, feebly waving her broom and sputtering like a bunch of squibs.

McGinnis and Sam from the veranda had been absorbedly interested in the happenings in front of the hotel. The Irishman whispered to the negro, who, comically showing his teeth and nodding his comprehension, poked his kinky black head between the bystanders and rolled his eyes at the detective.

"Marse Williams," he said, with exaggerated politeness, "Marse McGinnis 'lows dat you all better take supper wid us."

The crowd howled again and Horton said blandly.

"An' we'd jest be tickled plumb ter death ter have ye help us initiate the new sheriff tomorrow, eh, boys?"

"You betcha!" they shouted, hospitably.

"And we'd all be delighted to have you remain in Deadwood for the wedding," chuckled Gordon.

"Is that a 'condition?'" laughed the officer.

"It is," cried Parkyn joyously.

"Then it's a bet!" exclaimed Williams.

On a New York Central Pullman car, *en route* for the great metropolis, sat Robert Parkyn and his bride. Albany long since had been left behind and the train was following the Hudson on its way to the sea. As they gazed through the window at the enchanting river and mountain scenery that flew swiftly by, the couple sought each other's hands and sighed contentedly.

"Sweetheart," he murmured, "the dear old Hudson looks mighty good to me, but never again will it seem so wonderful and so alluring as it did during those awful days when I was condemned to gaze at that majestic river through a network of steel. Jordan and the Promised Land never seemed so fair to

the chosen people of the Lord as did that beautiful stream in those dark days. And how kind those waters were on that fateful day last spring when the river received me into its bosom and concealed me from the guards who sought my death!"

She looked up at him understandingly and for a long time they sat in silence.

"Josephine, dear, we are coming to the place where my hopes were buried—and where they were re-born, thanks to you, my own."

He felt her shudder as she recalled the fateful events of that April day only a few short months before, and reassuringly he passed his arm about her slender waist and drew her closer to him.

"We will be past in a moment, dear," he said gently, "and then let us forget it forever. I promise you that we never will travel on this part of the Central again. It is too severe an ordeal for both of us."

As the train whirled rapidly by Sing Sing, she suddenly looked questioningly into his face.

"Do you know what day this is, Robert?"

"Why—it's Thursday, the—By Jove! it's Thanksgiving, isn't it?"

"Yes, dear, and it needs no official proclamation to make it so—for us. I am not so sure that I ought to regard with hatred those awful buildings over there, after all. They have been very useful to me; they have brought me happiness. They brought me to you, Robert, and today they make me appreciate Thanksgiving as I never before appreciated it."

"Possibly you are more just and more logical than I, my love," he rejoined. "Will Carleton may have been right when he wrote:

> " 'But one thing's settled with me—
> to appreciate Heaven well,

'Tis good for a man to have
some fifteen minutes of Hell.'

"I had six months of the worst hell that man ever invented for the torture of his fellow man, and it would stump a greater poet than Carleton to express my appreciation of the heaven that has come to me.

"It is strange that the drift of one's life should be so guided and impelled by the currents of other men's lives. Think, Josephine, of what we owe to Bull Hennessy—who typified the political corruption that sways the great city towards which we now are hurrying—to Stubby, that outcast who was more sinned against than sinning, and to that grand old man, Major Donaldson.

"I wonder where the Major is now," he mused.

"He returned to his old home in Ithaca," she said, "where he is trying to correct with his pen the same evils that he so gallantly fought back yonder. You knew that he lost his position soon after—?"

"Yes," he interrupted, quietly, "I learned it from the papers before I left New York, and I often have wondered if he ever has been sorry that he befriended me. I wish I might see the dear old man again and tell him how things have—"

She laid her hand upon his, in gentle interruption.

"The Major never has been sorry, dearest. He has said so—and he already knows. I wrote him and told him the rest of your story."

"He is a wonderful man, Josephine, and the world will appreciate his work, some day—when it loses its smoked glasses and its eyes get used to the light."

He was strangely quiet for a long while, gazing out of the window. Then he whispered:

"How blessings and curses commingle in this queer old world of ours. This little town through which we now are passing, was the scene of that

awful fight among the laborers, in which I was wounded and which was responsible for what promised to be the complete wreckage of my life. And yet it was the beginning of the road that led straight to you, my heart's desire."

She nestled beside him so closely that the conductor, who just then was passing, looked curiously at them, grinned in cordial sympathy and winked knowingly at a pleasant-faced, white-haired old couple sitting across the aisle, who glanced at the pair and smiled back at the official.

"Josephine, dear," he said, thoughtfully, "I have been wondering if our honeymoon isn't likely to change your views of the west and its people. Possibly you may want to remain permanently in the east."

"Never!" she replied, with convincing emphasis. "We may outgrow Deadwood, for no one knows what its future will be, but I want the free air, the grand old hills and the noble warm-hearted men and women of the west—people who, as that dear old Tom Horton would say, 'will stand without hitchin' an' show the right color under the acid.'"

"Well, little girl," he said, patting her hand approvingly, "you have exactly expressed my own sentiments. I will at once close with those New York parties with whom I have been corresponding regarding the mine. That will settle the money question for us—for all time, I hope. When our honeymoon is over we will return to the west, where I will serve those rough, honest people conscientiously—if not intelligently. They elected me Sheriff in good faith, and I'll not abuse their confidence."

"Yes, dear," she murmured, smiling dreamily, "we will go back—home!"

THE END

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